ASSEMBLY, No. 5072

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 7, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman GORDON M. JOHNSON
District 37 (Bergen)
Assemblyman ANTHONY S. VERRELLI
District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

SYNOPSIS

Requires those holding elective public office to undergo diversity and anti-bias training.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/7/2020)

AN ACT concerning diversity and anti-bias training for those holding elective public office and supplementing various sections of statutory law.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Legislature shall provide diversity and anti-bias training for its members. Each member of the Legislature shall take the training once per term of office either in-person or online. A certificate of completion shall be submitted to the Legislative Counsel. The certificate of completion shall be public information.

2. Every county shall provide diversity and anti-bias training for the members of its governing body holding elective public office, all constitutional officers, the county executive in counties that have adopted the county executive plan of the "Optional County Charter Law," P.L.1972, c.154 (C.40:41A-1 et seq.), and the register of deeds and mortgages in counties that have an established elective office of register of deeds and mortgages. Each person shall take the training once per term of office either in-person or online. A certification of completion shall be submitted to the clerk of the board of chosen freeholders. The certificate of completion shall be public information.

For purposes of this section, "constitutional officer" includes county clerks, surrogates, and sheriffs.

3. Every municipality shall provide diversity and anti-bias training for the members of its governing body holding elective public office. Each member shall take the training once per term of office either in-person or online. A certificate of completion shall be submitted to the municipal clerk. The certificate of completion shall be public information.

For purposes of this section, "municipality" includes any city, town, township, village, or borough.

4. Every school district shall provide diversity and anti-bias training for the members of its governing body holding elective public office. Each member shall take the training once per term of office either in-person or online. A certification of completion shall be submitted to the Department of Education. The certificate of completion shall be public information.

5. Every fire district shall provide diversity and anti-bias training for the members of its governing body holding elective public office. Each member shall take the training once per term of

office either in-person or online. A certificate of completion shall be submitted to the municipal clerk. The certificate of completion shall be public information.

6. a. The Division on Civil Rights shall develop diversity and anti-bias training materials for both in-person and online instruction required in accordance with sections 1 through 5, inclusive, of P.L. , c. (C.)(pending before the Legislature as this bill). The training materials shall be designed to promote positive interactions with, and outreach to, constituents against whom practices of discrimination are made unlawful pursuant to the "Law Against Discrimination," P.L.1945, c.169 (C.10:5-1 et seq.).

b. The division shall make the training materials available to the Legislature and the governing bodies of counties, municipalities, school districts, and fire districts.

c. The division shall periodically assess the training materials and update them as needed.

7. Sections 1 through 5 of this act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month following enactment and section 6 shall take effect immediately. The Legislature, counties, municipalities, school districts, and fire districts may take anticipatory action in advance of that date as may be necessary for the timely implementation of this act.

STATEMENT

This bill would require diversity and anti-bias training for elected members of the Legislature and the governing bodies of counties, municipalities, school districts, and fire districts. Training would also be required for all constitutional officers including county clerks, surrogates, and sheriffs. In addition, county executives and registers of deeds and mortgages would be required to take the training in counties that have established and hold elections for those positions.

The training would have to be completed at least once per term of office either in-person or online. Once the training has been completed, a certificate of completion will be sent to the Legislative Counsel, the clerk for the board of chosen freeholders, the municipal clerk, or the Department of Education. Such certificates of completion will be considered public information.

Training materials would be developed by the Division on Civil Rights and made available to members of the Legislature and the governing bodies of counties, municipalities, school districts, and fire districts.

In discharging their official duties, those who hold elective public office impact people of all backgrounds and cultures. In conducting their important work, it is critically important for them to understand the diverse backgrounds of the people they serve while eliminating any internal biases they may have.