

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 374

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 27, 2020

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 374.

As amended by the committee, this bill would require each county in the State to form a nine-member “County Inmate Reentry Committee.”

The committee in each county will be tasked with identifying those services available in the county that may be needed by inmates upon release from a county correctional facility. These services include housing, food, medical care, clothing, substance use disorder treatment, mental health care, employment, and education. The committee will also be required to establish a health information exchange for sharing county inmate health data between the county correctional facility and appropriate medical, mental health, social service, and other providers. In addition, the committee will be required to establish best practices for preparing county inmates for release; providing appropriate services to county inmates upon release; and continuing post-release services, support, and supervision for at least one year. Finally, the committee will make recommendations to the county and municipalities as to laws and regulations that may be needed to prepare county inmates for successful reentry into the community and reduce recidivism.

The nine-member county committees are to be comprised of: a member of the board of chosen freeholders; the warden or other executive head of the county correctional facility; the president of a county college serving the county; the head of the county board of social services; a public member who provides reentry services in the county; a public member who provides substance use disorder treatment services in the county; and three public members who represent the general public.

The county committee is to meet as soon as practicable after the members have been appointed. A chair is to be selected from among the members to serve a one-year term. The committee is to meet at least monthly and five members constitute a quorum to conduct

official business. The meetings of the county committees are subject to the "Open Public Meetings Act."

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments clarify that the County Inmate Reentry Committee member representing the board of chosen freeholders is to be selected by the board of chosen freeholders. The amendments also clarify that the president of a county community college means the president of a county college serving the county, as some counties are jointly served by a single county college.

The committee amendments make various technical changes, including updating references to "substance abuse services" to read "substance use disorder treatment services."