

SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 561

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 30, 2020

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 561.

As reported by the committee, this bill creates a task force to be known as the "Task Force on Driver Distractions" to study and make recommendations concerning the impact of driver distractions on road and highway traffic safety. The task force is to consist of 13 members, including three public members with education or experience in highway traffic safety.

The task force is to organize within 120 days after the appointment of the three public members and is to select a chairperson. The Division of Highway Traffic Safety is to provide the necessary professional and clerical staff to the task force. Five members of the task force constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

The task force's charge is to study and develop recommendations concerning the issue of driver distractions and highway safety including, but not limited to, electronic communication devices.

The bill requires the task force to develop recommendations for public and private strategies and for legislative or regulatory action, if deemed appropriate. The recommendations are to include suggestions for the development of a public information campaign to increase the awareness of the risks associated with driving distractions and to educate and inform motorists of methods to eliminate or minimize these risks. The task force also is required to develop recommendations for improving highway traffic safety by reducing motor vehicle accidents related to the use of electronic communication technology in conjunction with the operation of a motor vehicle.

The task force is required to submit an interim report after six months, and a final report containing its findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action, no later than one year after its organization. The task force is to expire 30 days after the issuance of the final report.

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.