SENATE, No. 2211

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator VIN GOPAL
District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes presumption against admission into pretrial intervention program for persons who commit theft against nonprofit organizations.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ACT concerning pretrial intervention and amending N.J.S.2C:43-12.

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

1. N.J.S.2C:43-12 is amended to read as follows:

2C:43-12 a. Public policy. The purpose of N.J.S.2C:43-12 through N.J.S.2C:43-22 is to effectuate a Statewide program of Pretrial Intervention. It is the policy of the State of New Jersey that supervisory treatment should ordinarily be limited to persons who have not previously been convicted of any criminal offense under the laws of New Jersey, or under any criminal law of the United States, or any other state when supervisory treatment would:

(1) Provide applicants, on an equal basis, with opportunities to avoid ordinary prosecution by receiving early rehabilitative services or supervision, when such services or supervision can reasonably be expected to deter future criminal behavior by an applicant, and when there is apparent causal connection between the offense charged and the rehabilitative or supervisory need, without which cause both the alleged offense and the need to prosecute might not have occurred; or

(2) Provide an alternative to prosecution for applicants who might be harmed by the imposition of criminal sanctions as presently administered, when such an alternative can be expected to serve as sufficient sanction to deter criminal conduct; or

(3) Provide a mechanism for permitting the least burdensome form of prosecution possible for defendants charged with "victimless" offenses, other than defendants who were public officers or employees charged with offenses that involved or touched their office or employment; or

(4) Provide assistance to criminal calendars in order to focus expenditure of criminal justice resources on matters involving serious criminality and severe correctional problems; or

(5) Provide deterrence of future criminal or disorderly behavior by an applicant in a program of supervisory treatment.

b. (1) Admission of an applicant into a program of supervisory treatment shall be measured according to the applicant's amenability to correction, responsiveness to rehabilitation and the nature of the offense.

(2) There shall be a presumption against admission into a program of supervisory treatment for:

(a) a defendant who was a public officer or employee whose offense involved or touched upon his public office or employment; **[**and**]**

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined <u>thus</u> is new matter.

(b) a defendant charged with any crime or offense involving domestic violence, as defined in subsection a. of section 3 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-19) if the defendant committed the crime or offense while subject to a temporary or permanent restraining order issued pursuant to the provisions of the "Prevention of Domestic Violence Act of 1991," P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-17 et al.) or if the crime or offense charged involved violence or the threat of violence. For purposes of this subparagraph, a crime or offense involves violence or the threat of violence if the victim sustains serious or significant bodily injury as defined in subsection b. or d. of N.J.S.2C:11-1, or the actor is armed with and uses a deadly weapon or threatens by word or gesture to use a deadly weapon as defined in subsection c. of N.J.S.2C:11-1, or threatens to inflict serious or significant bodily injury; and

(c) a defendant charged with theft pursuant to N.J.S.2C:20-2 if the defendant committed the theft against a nonprofit organization. As used in this subparagraph, “nonprofit organization” means an organization exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. s.501(c)(3).

c. The decision and reasons therefor made by the designated judges (or assignment judges), prosecutors and program directors in granting or denying applications for supervisory treatment, in recommending and ordering termination from the program or dismissal of charges, in all cases shall be reduced to writing and disclosed to the applicant.

d. If an applicant desires to challenge the decision of the prosecutor or program director not to recommend enrollment in a program of supervisory treatment the proceedings prescribed under N.J.S.2C:43-14 and in accordance with the Rules of Court shall be followed.

e. Referral. At any time prior to trial but after the filing of a criminal complaint, or the filing of an accusation or the return of an indictment, with the consent of the prosecutor and upon written recommendation of the program director, the assignment judge or a judge designated by him may postpone all further proceedings against an applicant and refer said applicant to a program of supervisory treatment approved by the Supreme Court. Prosecutors and program directors shall consider in formulating their recommendation of an applicant's participation in a supervisory treatment program, among others, the following criteria:

(1) The nature of the offense;

(2) The facts of the case;

(3) The motivation and age of the defendant;

(4) The desire of the complainant or victim to forego prosecution;

(5) The existence of personal problems and character traits which may be related to the applicant's crime and for which services are unavailable within the criminal justice system, or which may be provided more effectively through supervisory treatment and the

probability that the causes of criminal behavior can be controlled by proper treatment;

(6) The likelihood that the applicant's crime is related to a condition or situation that would be conducive to change through his participation in supervisory treatment;

(7) The needs and interests of the victim and society;

(8) The extent to which the applicant's crime constitutes part of a continuing pattern of anti-social behavior;

(9) The applicant's record of criminal and penal violations and the extent to which he may present a substantial danger to others;

(10) Whether or not the crime is of an assaultive or violent nature, whether in the criminal act itself or in the possible injurious consequences of such behavior;

(11) Consideration of whether or not prosecution would exacerbate the social problem that led to the applicant's criminal act;

(12) The history of the use of physical violence toward others;

(13) Any involvement of the applicant with organized crime;

(14) Whether or not the crime is of such a nature that the value of supervisory treatment would be outweighed by the public need for prosecution;

(15) Whether or not the applicant's involvement with other people in the crime charged or in other crime is such that the interest of the State would be best served by processing his case through traditional criminal justice system procedures;

(16) Whether or not the applicant's participation in pretrial intervention will adversely affect the prosecution of codefendants; and

(17) Whether or not the harm done to society by abandoning criminal prosecution would outweigh the benefits to society from channeling an offender into a supervisory treatment program.

The prosecutor and the court, in formulating their recommendations or decisions regarding an applicant's participation in a supervisory treatment program, shall give due consideration to the victim's position on whether the defendant should be admitted.

f. Review of Supervisory Treatment Applications; Procedure Upon Denial. Each applicant for supervisory treatment shall be entitled to full and fair consideration of his application. If an application is denied, the program director or the prosecutor shall precisely state his findings and conclusion which shall include the facts upon which the application is based and the reasons offered for the denial. If the applicant desires to challenge the decision of a program director not to recommend, or of a prosecutor not to consent to, enrollment into a supervisory treatment program, a motion shall be filed before the designated judge (or assignment judge) authorized pursuant to the Rules of Court to enter orders.

g. Limitations. (1) Supervisory treatment may occur only once with respect to any defendant and any person who has previously

received supervisory treatment under section 27 of P.L.1970, c.226 (C.24:21-27), a conditional discharge pursuant to N.J.S.2C:36A-1, a conditional dismissal pursuant to P.L.2013, c.158 (C.2C:43-13.1 et al.), or was granted a dismissal due to successful participation in the Veterans Diversion Program pursuant to P.L.2017, c.42 (C.2C:43-23 et al.) shall not be eligible for supervisory treatment under this section.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, supervisory treatment, as provided herein, shall be available to a defendant irrespective of whether the defendant contests his guilt of the charge or charges against him.

(3) Admission into supervisory treatment shall be available to the following defendants only upon entering a plea of guilty: (a) a defendant charged with a first or second degree crime; (b) a defendant charged with any crime if the defendant had previously been convicted of a first or second degree crime; (c) a defendant charged with a third or fourth degree crime involving domestic violence, as defined in subsection a. of section 3 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-19); or (d) a defendant charged with any disorderly persons or petty disorderly persons offense involving domestic violence, as defined in subsection a. of section 3 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-19) if the defendant committed the offense while subject to a temporary or permanent restraining order issued pursuant to the provisions of the "Prevention of Domestic Violence Act of 1991," P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-17 et al.). For any such defendant, following the plea of guilty the plea shall be held in an inactive status pending termination of supervisory treatment pursuant to subsection d. or e. of N.J.S.2C:43-13. Upon successful completion of the program of supervisory treatment the charges shall be dismissed.

h. Termination. Termination of supervisory treatment under this section shall be immediately reported to the assignment judge of the county who shall forward such information to the Administrative Director of the Courts.

i. Appointment of Program Directors; Authorized Referrals. Programs of supervisory treatment and appointment of the program directors require approval by the Supreme Court with the consent of the assignment judge and prosecutor. Referrals of participants from supervisory treatment programs may be to any public or private office or agency, including but not limited to, programs within the probation service of the court, offering counseling or any other social service likely to aid in the rehabilitation of the participant and to deter the commission of other offenses.

j. Health Care Professional Licensing Board Notification. The program director shall promptly notify the State Board of Medical Examiners when a State licensed physician or podiatrist has been enrolled in a supervisory treatment program after he has been charged with an offense involving drugs or alcohol.

The Attorney General shall develop guidelines to ensure the uniform exercise of discretion by prosecutors in formulating their recommendations on participation in a supervisory treatment program by an applicant charged with a crime or offense involving domestic violence, as defined in subsection a. of section 3 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-19).
(cf: P.L.2017, c.42, s.10)

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes a presumption against admission into the pretrial intervention program for persons who commit theft against nonprofit organizations.

Under current law, the pretrial intervention program, which is designed for first time offenders, provides defendants with an alternative to traditional prosecution. A defendant charged with an indictable offense may apply to participate in the pretrial intervention program. Prosecutors and the pretrial intervention program director are required to consider certain criteria in formulating a recommendation of an applicant's participation in the program including, but not limited to, such as the nature of the offense, the motivation and age of the defendant, the needs and interests of the victim and society, and the applicant's criminal record and the extent to which the applicant may present a substantial danger to others.

Under this bill, there would be a presumption against admission into this program for a person who commits theft against a nonprofit organization, including certain volunteer fire companies. Under the bill, a "nonprofit organization" is defined as an organization exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. s.501(c)(3).