

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2331

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 22, 2020

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Assists inmates released from incarceration in obtaining necessary reentry benefits.
- Type of Impact:** State expenditure increase.
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Corrections, Department of Human Services.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that this bill would result in an indeterminate annual expenditure increase to the Department of Corrections (DOC). The OLS lacks sufficient information to quantify the fiscal impact.
- The DOC is likely to experience increased administrative and personnel costs. The bill requires the DOC to assist inmates with completing applications for enrollment in social service programs, including but not limited to Medicaid, Work First New Jersey, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- The bill also requires that State inmates be released with a 30-day supply of prescription medications and two additional refills, in addition to the two-week supply required under current law. This would result in a substantial cost increase that is difficult to quantify, since the medication requirements of different inmates are likely to vary.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill would require State, county, and municipal agencies and New Jersey non-profits to temporarily accept as a valid form of identification the identification cards issued by the DOC to inmates while they are in custody in lieu of a New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC)

issued non-driver identification card when MVC agencies are closed during a declared public health emergency, state of emergency, or both. This would enable releasees to gain access to the services for which they are eligible even when the MVC is closed during a public health emergency. Currently, the State’s Fair Release and Reentry Act of 2009 requires the DOC to ensure inmates are provided with certain credentials, documents, and information to assist their reentry efforts at least 10 days prior to release from incarceration. The credentials to be provided include non-driver identification cards that are issued by the MVC.

The bill would increase the supply of prescription drugs to be provided to inmates prior to release from a two-week supply of medication to a 30-day period and two additional refills, in addition to the two-week supply already provided under current law, for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency and to ensure consistency with clinical guidelines.

The DOC would also be required to assist inmates with completing applications for enrollment in social service programs, including but not limited to Medicaid, Work First New Jersey, and SNAP.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that this bill would result in an indeterminate annual expenditure increase to the DOC, which is likely to experience increased administrative and personnel costs. The DOC would be required to assist inmates with completing applications for enrollment in social service programs, including but not limited to, Medicaid, Work First New Jersey, and SNAP. According to data made available by the DOC’s Office of Policy and Planning, 98 inmates were in the “reentry” category for the month of April 2020. It is unclear if that would be the total number of inmates being considered for release from incarceration.

The bill also requires that State inmates be released with a 30-day supply of prescription medications and two additional refills, in addition to the two-week supply required under current law. This would result in a substantial cost increase that is difficult to quantify, since the medication requirements of different inmates are likely to vary.

Section: *Judiciary*

Analyst: *Anuja Pande Joshi*
 Assistant Research Analyst

Approved: *Frank W. Haines III*
 Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).