

SENATE, No. 2481

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 14, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator ROBERT W. SINGER

District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes task force to study the impact of and response to COVID-19 pandemic in New Jersey.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** establishing a task force to study the impact of and response
2 to the COVID-19 pandemic in New Jersey.

3

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

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7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 The COVID-19 outbreak spread across the United States and the
9 world. The outbreak was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei, China, in
10 December 2019, and was recognized as a pandemic by the World
11 Health Organization on March 11, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic
12 caused a significant health crisis for the residents of the State of New
13 Jersey. New Jersey's healthcare system was severely overburdened,
14 and New Jersey's financial health and the financial health of its
15 residents was disrupted. Many businesses and government facilities
16 closed, while others reduced operations. The schools in New Jersey
17 closed, affecting teachers, students, and parents. The establishment
18 of a task force to examine the impact and how the State of New Jersey
19 responded to the crisis is necessary and appropriate.

20

21 2. There is established a task force, to be known as the "New
22 Jersey COVID-19 Review Task Force," to consist of 16 members.
23 The Secretary of State, the Commissioner of the Department of
24 Health, the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Workforce
25 Development, the Commissioner of the Department of Education, the
26 Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, and the State
27 Treasurer, or their designees, shall serve as ex-officio members.
28 The President of the Senate shall appoint two members, one of whom
29 shall be a representative of the League of Municipalities, and one of
30 whom shall be a representative of the New Jersey Hospital
31 Association. The Minority Leader of the Senate shall appoint two
32 members, one of whom shall be a member of the public with a child
33 in the New Jersey school system, and one of whom shall be a member
34 of the public with a child with a disability in the New Jersey school
35 system. The Speaker of the General Assembly shall appoint two
36 members, one of whom shall be a representative of the New Jersey
37 Association of Counties, and one of whom shall be a representative
38 of the New Jersey State Nurses Association. The Minority Leader of
39 the General Assembly shall appoint two members, one of whom shall
40 be a member of the public with a child in the New Jersey school
41 system, and one of whom shall be a member of the public with a child
42 with a disability in the New Jersey school system. The Governor
43 shall appoint two members, one of whom shall be a representative of
44 the New Jersey Business and Industry Association, and one of whom
45 shall be a member of the general public who resided in New Jersey
46 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1 3. The members of the task force shall be appointed and shall
2 hold their initial organizational meeting within 45 days after the
3 Governor declares an end to the COVID-19 State of Emergency. The
4 members shall elect one of the members to serve as chair and one of
5 the members to serve as vice-chair. The chair may appoint a
6 secretary, who need not be a member of the task force. The members
7 shall serve without compensation, but shall be eligible for
8 reimbursement for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the
9 performance of their official duties within the limits of funds
10 appropriated or otherwise made available to the task force.

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12 4. The task force shall meet at the call of the chair. The task
13 force shall hold at least three public hearings in different parts of the
14 State and elicit testimony from the public at such times and places as
15 the chair shall designate. A meeting of the task force shall be called
16 at the request of nine of the task force's members and nine members
17 of the task force shall constitute a quorum at any meeting thereof.

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19 5. It shall be the duty of the task force to study the impact of,
20 and New Jersey's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At a
21 minimum, the task force shall:

- 22 a. review the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the State's
23 healthcare system;
24 b. review the screening, assessment, testing, and restriction
25 requirements utilized during the pandemic;
26 c. analyze the financial impact of the pandemic on the State and
27 its residents;
28 d. review complaints of price gouging;
29 e. assess the actions taken to reduce the risk of exposure and
30 spread;
31 f. assess the actions taken related to the education of students in
32 the k-12 schools in the State, especially students with a disability;
33 and
34 g. consider such other matters as the members of the task force
35 may deem appropriate.

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37 6. The task force shall make recommendations for legislation or
38 such other action as it deems appropriate with regard to improving,
39 expanding, and facilitating a response to a Statewide or national
40 medical emergency.

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42 7. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
43 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
44 municipal department, board, bureau, commission or agency, as it
45 may require and as may be available for its purposes, and to employ
46 stenographic and clerical assistance and incur traveling and other
47 miscellaneous expenses as may be necessary in order to perform its

1 duties, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made
2 available to the task force.

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4 8. The task force shall report its findings and recommendations
5 to the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-
6 19.1), and the Governor within eighteen months of its initial
7 organizational meeting.

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9 9. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire after
10 the task force submits its findings and recommendations to the
11 Governor and the Legislature.

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STATEMENT

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16 This bill establishes a 16 member task force, to be known as the
17 “New Jersey COVID-19 Review Task Force,” to examine the impact
18 of the COVID-19 pandemic to New Jersey, and New Jersey response
19 to the COVID-19 pandemic.

20 At a minimum, the task force will:

21 review the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the State’s
22 healthcare system;

23 review the screening, assessment, testing, and restriction
24 requirements utilized during the pandemic;

25 analyze the financial impact of the pandemic on the State and its
26 residents;

27 review complaints of price gouging;

28 assess the actions taken to reduce the risk of exposure and spread;

29 assess the actions taken related to the education of students in k-
30 12 schools in the State, especially students with a disability; and

31 consider such other matters as the members of the task force may
32 deem appropriate.

33 The task force may make recommendations for legislation or such
34 other action as it deems appropriate with regard to improving,
35 expanding, and facilitating a response to a Statewide or national
36 medical emergency.

37 The task force will report its findings and recommendations to the
38 Legislature and the Governor within eighteen months of its initial
39 organizational meeting. The task force will expire after the
40 submission of its report.