

SENATE COMMUNITY AND URBAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3741

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 6, 2021

The Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3741.

This bill would require the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), no more than 180 days after the bill's effective date, to reestablish and administer a program for the certification of recreation administrators in New Jersey. A similar certification program for recreation administrators and recreation supervisors, established by P.L.1966, c.291 (C.13:1C-1 et seq.) and administered by the New Jersey Board of Recreation, was used as a nationwide model and remained in operation until the enactment of P.L.2013, c.253. P.L.2013, c.253 repealed numerous laws governing inactive boards and commissions and, while it eliminated the New Jersey Board of Recreation Examiners, it also indicated that the board's powers, duties, and functions, including its authority to operate a recreation certification program, were to be transferred to the DCA. However, due to a problem with implementation, the certification program's regulations have been allowed to lapse, and examinations for certification are no longer being offered in the State.

The reestablishment of a State-level certification program for recreation administrators is a reasonable and important means by which the State can promote the emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth of the people of the State through recreation services. Certified recreation administrators are better able, when compared to their noncertified peers, to facilitate recreational programs and services for municipal, county, or State government agencies, youth centers, out-of-school care and activities providers, senior and adult day care centers, and other similar organizations. Certification also works to protect individuals in the State who receive recreation services, including some of New Jersey's most vulnerable populations such as children, seniors, and individuals with special needs, by identifying those professionals who meet high-quality care criteria. For these reasons, the bill would provide for the reestablishment of a certification program for recreation administrators and authorize all previously certified recreation administrators and recreation supervisors to obtain a new certification under the bill's provisions.

No more than 30 days after the certification program is reestablished under the bill, the DCA will be required to send written

notice to each previously certified recreation supervisor and each previously certified recreation administrator, indicating that the person is eligible to apply for new certification or, if appropriate, is eligible to apply for the automatic reinstatement of the person's pre-existing certification, as provided by the bill.

Under the bill, the DCA would be required to automatically reinstate a previously certified recreation administrator, provided that the person submits, to the DCA, a completed reinstatement request form and a reinstatement fee of \$25, no more than 60 days after receipt of the DCA's notice regarding the right to reinstatement. Any person who fails to submit a request for reinstatement within the 60-day reinstatement grace period established by the bill will be deemed to have a lapsed certification, will no longer be eligible for the automatic reinstatement of the certification, as provided by the bill, and will be required to comply with the procedures applicable to new applicants.

A new applicant for certification as a recreation administrator under the bill will be required to submit to the DCA: a completed application form; an application fee of \$25; and documentation sufficient to establish, to the commissioner's satisfaction, that the applicant is either certified by the National Recreation and Park Association as a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) or is otherwise qualified, by education or experience as determined by the DCA, to serve as a recreation administrator in the State.

The reestablished certification program will not provide for the separate certification of recreation supervisors. However, the bill provides that any previously certified recreation supervisor will be eligible to apply for a new certification as a recreation administrator, based on the person's prior supervisory experience.

The bill would require the DCA to issue a new, printed certificate to any person who is certified to serve as a recreation administrator, including any person whose prior certification has been automatically reinstated. Each certificate issued under the bill, including a certificate reinstated for a previously certified recreation administrator, will be valid for, and will automatically expire after, a period of two years following its date of issuance, unless the holder biennially renews the certification in accordance with the procedure specified by the bill.

A person seeking the biennial renewal of certification as a recreation administrator will be required, prior to the expiration of the certificate, to submit to the DCA: a completed renewal application form; a renewal fee of \$25; and documentation verifying that the person has completed at least twenty hours of continuing education credits in appropriate subject areas, as required by the DCA, during the preceding two-year certification period.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Community Affairs to adopt rules and regulations to implement the bill's provisions. The rules and regulations are to include, but need not be limited to:

1) standards to be used by the DCA in determining whether an applicant who is not certified as a CPRP, including, but not limited to, a previously certified recreation supervisor, has otherwise obtained the necessary education or experience to serve and be certified as a recreation administrator; and

2) biennial continuing education requirements that are to be satisfied by a certified recreation administrator for the purposes of renewing an existing certification.