

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 117

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 11, 2021

Sponsored by:

Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes commission to study effects of COVID-19 on small businesses.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** establishing a commission to study the
2 effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on small businesses.
3
4 **WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that has caused a global
5 pandemic leading to unprecedented and overwhelming public
6 health and economic crises; and
7 **WHEREAS**, In response to the devastating effect COVID-19 has had
8 throughout the country, the President issued a declaration of a
9 National State of Emergency on March 13, 2020 and announced
10 social distancing measures in an effort to halt the spread of COVID-
11 19; and
12 **WHEREAS**, The State of New Jersey, the state with the second highest
13 incidence of COVID-19 in the United States, also enacted policies
14 that required residents to remain at home and practice social
15 distancing; and
16 **WHEREAS**, Social distancing, while effective at slowing the spread of
17 COVID-19, has caused considerable economic disruption
18 throughout the State and throughout the country, with many
19 businesses forced to close or operate at reduced capacity; and
20 **WHEREAS**, The economic disruption caused by COVID-19 has had an
21 especially detrimental effect on small businesses, which lack the
22 resources and infrastructure available to larger companies to
23 weather such economic difficulties; and
24 **WHEREAS**, The economic disruption has caused a ripple effect that has
25 affected not only small businesses, which historically have been
26 economic generators on their own, but also larger corporations who
27 rely on their small business counterparts to act as customers and
28 business counterparts; and
29 **WHEREAS**, These disruptions have caused financial hardships not only
30 for small business owners, who have seen a reduction in income,
31 but also for small business employees, who have faced layoffs,
32 reduced hours, and furloughs; and
33 **WHEREAS**, Small businesses, those firms employing fewer than 100
34 employees, should be equipped with information and resources to
35 better prepare and handle similar future scenarios; and
36 **WHEREAS**, A study focused on collecting data on the number and
37 sizes of small businesses throughout the State and how the COVID-
38 19 outbreak affected them, how many small businesses received aid
39 in the forms of grants and loans during the COVID-19 outbreak,
40 and data on minority, women, and veteran owned small businesses
41 would greatly aid small businesses throughout the State; now,
42 therefore,
43
44 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
45 *State of New Jersey:*
46
47 1. a. There is hereby created a commission to be known as the
48 "Small Business Assistance Commission." The purpose of the
49 commission shall be to study the economic hardships brought onto

1 the State, specifically small businesses, by the COVID-19 outbreak,
2 and look for solutions to better handle any negative effects in the
3 event of another similar scenario.

4 b. The commission shall consist of eleven members as follows:
5 (1) Four members appointed by the Governor;
6 (2) One member appointed by the President of the Senate;
7 (3) One member appointed by the Speaker of the General
8 Assembly;
9 (4) One member appointed by the minority leader of the
10 Senate;
11 (5) One member appointed by the minority leader of the
12 General Assembly;
13 (6) One member appointed by the New Jersey Chamber of
14 Commerce;
15 (7) One member appointed by the New Jersey Business &
16 Industry Association; and
17 (8) One member appointed by the Chamber of Commerce
18 Southern New Jersey.

19 Any vacancy in the membership of the commission shall be
20 filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was
21 made.

22 c. All appointments to the commission shall be made within 30
23 days of the effective date of this act. The commission shall
24 organize as soon as practicable after the appointment of its
25 members and shall select a chairperson from among the
26 members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not
27 be a member of the commission. The presence of a majority of the
28 members of the commission shall constitute a quorum.

29 d. The commission may meet at the call of its chairperson at
30 the times and in the places it may deem appropriate and necessary
31 to fulfill its duties, and may conduct public hearings at the places it
32 shall designate. The members of the commission shall serve without
33 compensation, but may be reimbursed, within the limits of funds
34 made available to the commission, for necessary travel expenses
35 incurred in the performance of their duties.

36 e. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
37 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
38 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it
39 may require and may be available to it for its purpose. The New
40 Jersey Business Action Center shall provide professional and
41 clerical staff to the commission, as may be necessary to effectuate
42 the purposes of this act.

43 f. As used in this resolution “Small Business” means firms
44 employing fewer than 100 employees.

45 g. A report summarizing the activities and findings of the
46 commission shall be submitted to the Governor and, pursuant to
47 section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature no
48 later than 12 months following the date of the commission’s initial
49 meeting.

h. The commission's report shall include, but not be limited to, the commission's findings related to: the largest struggles faced by New Jersey small businesses because of COVID-19 and the largest struggles as small businesses attempt to recover from the effects of COVID-19; the most helpful and least helpful government resources available to small businesses; the programs that were most effective to support small businesses in innovation; and small business personal protective equipment (PPE) needs.

2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon submission of the commission's final report to the Governor and Legislature.

STATEMENT

This resolution establishes a commission to study the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on small businesses.

COVID-19, a novel coronavirus, has caused a global pandemic leading to an unprecedented and overwhelming public health crisis. In response to the devastating effect COVID-19 has had throughout the country, the President issued a declaration of a National State of Emergency on March 13, 2020 and announced social distancing measures in an effort to halt the spread of COVID-19. The State of New Jersey, the state with the second highest incidence of COVID-19 in the United States, also enacted policies that required residents to remain at home and practice social distancing. Social distancing, while effective at slowing the spread of COVID-19, has caused considerable economic disruption throughout the State and throughout the country, with many businesses forced to close or operate at reduced capacity. These disruptions have caused financial hardships for both small business owners, who have seen a reduction in income, and small business employees, who have faced layoffs, reduced hours, and furloughs. Furthermore, the economic disruption caused by COVID-19 has resulted in a ripple effect that has affected not only small businesses and their employees, which have historically economic generators on their own, but also larger corporations who rely on their small business counterparts act as customers and business counterparts.

Small businesses, those firms employing fewer than 100 employees, should be better equipped with information and access to resources to better handle similar future scenarios. A study focused on collecting data to review the number of small businesses that received grants and loans, such as those from the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, along with information pertaining to the number, size, and degree to which the business was affected by the COVID-19 outbreak would greatly aid small businesses across the State.