

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 90

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JULY 28, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator MICHAEL L. TESTA, JR.

District 1 (Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland)

Senator ANTHONY M. BUCCO

District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes task force to study effects of COVID-19 on MVC and to improve MVC preparedness for future pandemics.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 7/28/2020)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** establishing a task force to study the effects
2 of the COVID-19 outbreak on the New Jersey Motor Vehicle
3 Commission.
4
5 **WHEREAS**, COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that has caused a global
6 pandemic leading to unprecedented and overwhelming public
7 health and economic crises; and
8 **WHEREAS**, In response to the devastating effect COVID-19 has had
9 throughout the country, the President declared a National State of
10 Emergency on March 13, 2020 and announced certain measures in
11 an effort to halt the spread of COVID-19; and
12 **WHEREAS**, The State of New Jersey, which has the second highest
13 incidence of COVID-19 cases in the United States, also enacted
14 policies that required residents to remain at home and for non-
15 essential businesses to temporarily close; and
16 **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) was
17 deemed non-essential and has been closed since mid-March; and
18 **WHEREAS**, The MVC re-opened on July 7, 2020 and since that time
19 has faced a number of challenges and difficulties, including
20 technical problems and long customer wait times; and
21 **WHEREAS**, Some of the issues that have plagued the MVC since its re-
22 opening include technical problems with a text messaging system
23 that delayed the MVC's original opening date, hundreds of
24 customers lining up hours before agencies open, and police officers
25 being called to break up fights between customers; and
26 **WHEREAS**, New rules have been implemented by both the Governor
27 and the Chief Administrator of the MVC in an attempt to ease the
28 burden on the MVC and to quell customer frustrations, but these
29 new rules have been issued and implemented in a piecemeal fashion
30 and reactively, rather than proactively, after negative customer
31 experiences and agency overload; and
32 **WHEREAS**, These new rules include extended expiration dates for
33 license and registration renewals and vehicle inspections, customers
34 barred from lining up on MVC property until an hour before
35 agencies open, increased efforts by the MVC to make sure that
36 customers in line at agencies can be accommodated during the
37 business day, and the Governor's exemption of MVC employees
38 from state worker furloughs in July; and
39 **WHEREAS**, A task force, dedicated to studying the problems faced by
40 the MVC, including failures that occurred during re-opening, how
41 the agency can improve its response, and the potential of working
42 with third-parties to allay customer frustrations and agency burdens
43 in the event of another catastrophic event such as the COVID-19
44 outbreak is of paramount importance for both the MVC and all New
45 Jersey drivers; now, therefore,
46
47 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
48 *State of New Jersey:*

- 1 1. a. There is established a task force to be known as the
2 "New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission Pandemic Task Force."
3 The purpose of the task force shall be to study the challenges faced
4 by the commission because of the COVID-19 outbreak and look for
5 methods to improve the commission's preparedness and mitigate
6 any negative effects in the event of another similar scenario.
- 7 b. The task force shall consist of 7 members as follows:
8 (1) one member appointed by the Governor with relevant
9 expertise, knowledge, or experience;
10 (2) one member appointed by the President of the Senate with
11 relevant expertise, knowledge, or experience;
12 (3) one member appointed by the Speaker of the General
13 Assembly with relevant expertise, knowledge, or experience;
14 (4) one member appointed by the minority leader of the Senate
15 with relevant expertise, knowledge, or experience;
16 (5) one member appointed by the minority leader of the General
17 Assembly with relevant expertise, knowledge, or experience;
18 (6) the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle
19 Commission, or a designee; and
20 (7) a member of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission
21 appointed by the Chief Administrator.
- 22 Any vacancy in the membership of the task force shall be filled
23 in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.
- 24 c. All appointments to the task force shall be made within 30
25 days of the effective date of this joint resolution. The task force
26 shall organize as soon as practicable after the appointment of its
27 members and shall select a chairperson from among the
28 members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not
29 be a member of the task force. The presence of a majority of the
30 members of the task force shall constitute a quorum.
- 31 d. The task force may meet at the call of its chairperson at the
32 times and in the places it may deem appropriate and necessary to
33 fulfill its duties, and may conduct public hearings at the places it
34 shall designate. The members of the task force shall serve without
35 compensation, but may be reimbursed, within the limits of funds
36 made available to the task force, for necessary travel expenses
37 incurred in the performance of their duties.
- 38 e. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
39 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
40 municipal department, board, bureau, task force, or agency as it
41 may require and may be available to it for its purpose. The New
42 Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission shall provide professional and
43 clerical staff to the task force, as may be necessary to effectuate the
44 purposes of this act.
- 45 f. The task force shall submit a report summarizing the
46 activities and findings of the task force to the Governor and,

1 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
2 Legislature no later than 12 months following the date of the task
3 force's initial meeting.

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5 2. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately and shall
6 expire upon submission of the task force's final report to the
7 Governor and Legislature.

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10 STATEMENT

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12 This resolution establishes a task force to study the effects of the
13 COVID-19 outbreak on the New Jersey Motor Vehicle
14 Commission. The task force is to consist of five members: one
15 appointed by each of the Governor, Senate President, and Assembly
16 Speaker; the chief administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle
17 Commission (MVC) or a designee, and a member of the MVC. The
18 task force is required to submit a report to the Governor and
19 Legislature summarizing the activities and findings of the task force
20 within 12 months of the task force's initial meeting. Once the
21 report is issued, the authorization for the task force expires.

22 COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that has caused a global
23 pandemic leading to unprecedented and overwhelming public health
24 and economic crises. In response to the devastating effect COVID-
25 19 has had throughout the country, the President declared a
26 National State of Emergency on March 13, 2020 and announced
27 certain measures in an effort to halt the spread of COVID-19. The
28 State of New Jersey, which has the second highest incidence of
29 COVID-19 cases in the United States, also enacted policies that
30 required residents to remain at home and for non-essential
31 businesses to temporarily close.

32 The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) was deemed
33 non-essential and has been closed since mid-March. The MVC re-
34 opened on July 7, 2020 and since that time has faced a number of
35 challenges and difficulties, including technical problems and long
36 customer wait times.

37 New rules have been implemented by both the Governor and the
38 MVC in an attempt to ease the burden on the MVC and quell
39 customer frustrations, but have been issued and implemented in a
40 piecemeal fashion and only after negative customer experiences and
41 agency overload. These new rules include extended expiration
42 dates for license and registration renewals and vehicle inspections,
43 customers barred from lining up on MVC property until an hour
44 before agencies open, increased efforts by the MVC to make sure
45 that customers in line at agencies can be accommodated during the
46 business day, and the Governor's exemption of MVC employees
47 from state worker furloughs in July.

1 A task force, dedicated to studying the problems faced by the NJ
2 MVC, including what went wrong during re-opening, how the
3 agency can improve its response, and the potential of working with
4 third-parties to allay customer frustrations and agency burdens in
5 the event of another catastrophic event such as the COVID-19
6 outbreak is of paramount importance for both the MVC and all New
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