

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2637

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 27, 2017

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2637.

This bill would permit religious institutions to request that the Department of Children and Families (DCF) conduct a check of its child abuse records to determine if an incident of child abuse or neglect has been substantiated pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1974, c.437 (C.9:6-8.11) against any prospective or current employee or volunteer who may have access to, or provide instruction or other services to, children.

Current law specifies the circumstances under which DCF is authorized to disclose to certain entities records and reports of child abuse, information obtained by DCF in investigating such reports, and reports of findings that are forwarded to the State child abuse registry. Religious institutions are not included among the entities to which DCF is permitted to disclose this information, as was recently noted in an opinion of the Appellate Division of the Superior Court, decided April 5, 2013, in *New Jersey Div. of Youth & Family Servs. v. P.H. and J.C.*, 2013 N.J. Super. LEXIS 52.