

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1835

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 21, 2010

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 1835.

Currently, the only school bus drivers who are required to undergo a criminal history record check under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education are those school bus drivers who work either for a school district or for a bus contractor holding a contract with a district. As amended, this bill would require other school bus drivers to undergo this same record check. The bill specifically includes school bus drivers who are employed by the Department of Human Services, the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Law and Public Safety, or a school bus contractor holding a contract with one of these entities. This bill also includes school bus drivers who are employed by nonpublic schools or bus contractors holding a contract with one of these schools. Under current law it is optional for a nonpublic school to require its employees to undergo the criminal history record check.

The criminal history record check conducted through the Department of Education includes input from not only the Division of State Police, but also from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Using information from both entities provides a comprehensive review that transcends state lines and jurisdictions.

This bill also requires that the Motor Vehicle Commission and the Department of Education compare data files on a regular basis to ensure that any school bus driver disqualified by the department also has his special license revoked by the Motor Vehicle Commission. The special license, or "S" endorsement on the commercial driver's license, is one that is necessary to transport school age children. Comparing files will also assist in identifying school bus drivers who have had their special license revoked or suspended but who are still employed as school bus drivers. The Motor Vehicle Commission will notify the Department of Education of these cases and their employment will be terminated.