

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 598

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 8, 2012

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 598 with committee amendments.

This bill, as amended, requires that an individual who volunteers on an unpaid basis in a public school district to provide direct services to, or has direct contact with, pupils on a regular basis, without the supervision of school employees, must undergo a criminal history record check in accordance with the same standards and procedures used to conduct such checks on paid school district employees. Under current law a school district may choose to conduct background checks on volunteers and if it does so then the district must bear the cost of the check. Under this bill, the volunteer will bear the cost of the check.

The requirement to conduct criminal history record checks for such unpaid volunteers will first be applicable in the 2012-2013 school year. Any person serving in a school district as an unpaid volunteer in that school year or who first serves in that school district in any subsequent school year will be required to undergo a check.

The committee amended the bill to specify that a volunteer would be required to undergo a criminal history record check if the volunteer provides direct services or has direct contact with pupils on a regular basis without the supervision of a school employee. Additionally, the amendments remove language specifying that the commissioner would define who is an unpaid volunteer who has regular contact with students. Technical amendments were also included to update the list of disqualifying crimes.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2012-2013 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.