ASSEMBLY, No. 3842

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

215th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 21, 2013

Sponsored by:
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District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

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SYNOPSIS
Creates Task Force on Distracted Driving.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/8/2013)
AN ACT creating a task force on distracted driving.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. The Legislature finds that the increased use of technological devices in today’s fast-paced, multi-tasking society has created distractions for drivers in New Jersey, thereby compromising the safety of those using the roads and highways.

The Legislature further finds that the study and examination of the hazards of distracted driving, which may encompass communications technology and non-technical activities, is a valuable endeavor that would provide recommendations to aid in protecting users of this State's roads.

The Legislature therefore declares that it is altogether fitting and proper, and within the public interest, to create a task force to study and make recommendations concerning driver distractions and their impact on the safety of those who travel this State’s roads and highways.

2. a. There is created in the Department of Transportation a task force to be known as the "Task Force on Driver Distractions" to study and make recommendations concerning the impact of driver distractions on highway safety.

b. The task force shall consist of nine members as follows: the Commissioner of Transportation, ex officio, or a designee; the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee; the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, ex officio, or a designee; the Director of the Office of Highway Traffic Safety in the Department of Law and Public Safety, ex officio, or a designee; a member of the County Prosecutor’s Association of New Jersey or a designee; a member of the New Jersey State Municipal Prosecutors Association or a designee; and three public members with education or experience in highway traffic safety, one of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, one of whom shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and one of whom shall be appointed by the President of the Senate.

c. The members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties to the extent that such funds are made available for that purpose.

3. The task force shall organize within 120 days after the appointment of a majority of its members and shall select a chairperson from among the members. The task force shall meet at the call of the chairperson.

The Department of Transportation shall provide staff support to the task force. The task force also shall be entitled to call to its
assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any
State department, board, bureau, commission or agency, as it may
require and as may be available for its purposes, and to employ
stenographic and clerical assistance and incur traveling and other
miscellaneous expenses as may be necessary in order to perform its
duties, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made
available to it for its purposes.

4. a. The task force shall study and develop recommendations
concerning the issue of driver distractions and highway safety
including, but not limited to, recent communications technology and
non-technological activities.
b. The task force shall develop recommendations for public and
private strategies and recommendations for legislative or regulatory
action, if deemed appropriate, to address these issues. The
recommendations shall include suggestions for the development of
a public information campaign to increase the public’s awareness of
the risks associated with driving distractions and to educate and
inform motorists of methods to eliminate or minimize these risks.
The task force shall also develop recommendations for improving
highway and traffic safety by reducing motor vehicle accidents
related to the use of communications technology in conjunction
with the operation of a motor vehicle.

5. Pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the
task force shall issue an interim report not more than 180 days after
its organization. The task force shall submit a final report
containing its findings and recommendations, including any
recommendations for legislative or regulatory action that it deems
appropriate, no later than one year after the task force’s
organizational meeting.

6. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall expire 30
days after the issuance of its final report.

STATEMENT

This bill creates a task force in the Department of Transportation
to be known as the "Task Force on Driver Distractions" to study and
make recommendations concerning the impact of driver distractions
on highway safety.

The task force is to consist of nine members. The Commissioner
of Transportation, the Commissioner of Education, the Chief
Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, and
the Director of the Office of Highway Traffic Safety in the
Department of Law and Public Safety would serve ex-officio.
Members of the County Prosecutor’s Association of New Jersey and
New Jersey State Municipal Prosecutors Association also would be appointed to the task force. In addition, three public members with education or experience in highway traffic safety would be included in the membership, with one of these members to be appointed by the Governor, one by the President of the Senate, and one by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

The task force is to organize within 120 days after the appointment of a majority of its members and select a chairperson from among the members. The Department of Transportation would provide staff support to the task force.

The task force’s charge is to study and develop recommendations concerning the issue of driver distractions and highway safety including, but not limited to, electronic communication devices.

The bill requires the task force to develop recommendations for public and private strategies and recommendations for legislative or regulatory action, if deemed appropriate, to address these issues. The recommendations are to include suggestions for the development of a public information campaign to increase the awareness of the risks associated with driving distractions and to educate and inform motorists of methods to eliminate or minimize these risks. The task force also is required to develop recommendations for improving highway and traffic safety by reducing motor vehicle accidents related to the use of electronic communication technology in conjunction with the operation of a motor vehicle.

The task force is required to submit an interim report after six months, and a final report containing its findings and recommendations, including any recommendations for legislative or regulatory action, no later than one year after its organization. It would expire 30 days after the issuance of the final report.