ASSEMBLY STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4439

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 24, 2019

The Assembly State and Local Government Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4439.

As amended, this bill requires hotels with 100 or more guest rooms to equip hotel employees performing housekeeping or room service duties, at no cost to the employees, with panic devices for their protection against inappropriate conduct by guests when they are servicing guest rooms by themselves. The bill excludes hotel employees who are subject to collective bargaining agreements that address panic devices, or other safety and reporting procedures for employees working alone in guest rooms.

Under the bill as amended, "panic device" means any two-way radio or other electronic device which is kept on an employee's person when in a guest room, permitting the employee to communicate with, or otherwise summon immediate on-scene assistance from, a security officer, manager, supervisor, or other appropriate hotel staff.

The bill, as amended, requires hotel employers to refuse occupancy to a guest for three years if the guest is convicted of a crime in connection with an incident brought to the attention of the hotel employer by the pressing of a panic device.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- amend the definition of "hotel" to include only those establishments that contain at least 100 guest rooms;
- clarify the bill applies only to only to hotel employees performing housekeeping or room service duties;
- permit the employee to use the panic device if the employee reasonably believes that there is an immediate threat of assault;
- change the term "panic button" to "panic device" and revise the definition to mean any two-way radio or other electronic device kept on an employee's person when in a guest room, permitting the employee to communicate with, or otherwise

summon immediate on-scene assistance from, a security officer, manager, supervisor, or other appropriate hotel staff;

- exclude hotel employees who are subject to collective bargaining agreements that address panic devices or other safety and reporting procedures for employees working alone in guest rooms;
- remove the requirement that the hotel employer conduct internal investigations, but require the employer to report an incident involving inappropriate conduct, rather than report only criminal conduct, to law enforcement;
- require a hotel to refuse occupancy to a guest for three years if the guest is convicted of a crime in connection with an incident involving a panic device or that is reported by a hotel employee; and
- require the hotel employer to notify only those hotel employees who are assigned to housekeeping or room service duties in the room in which an alleged incident occurred of the presence and location of a guest named on the list.