ASSEMBLY, No. 5582 STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

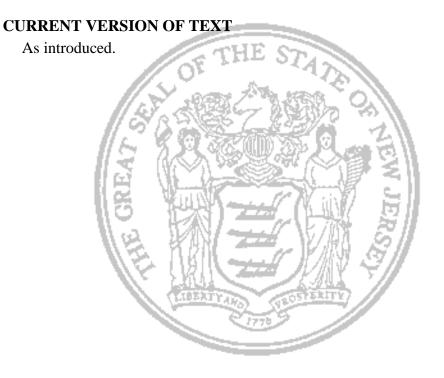
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Sponsored by: Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO District 20 (Union) Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT District 31 (Hudson) Assemblyman RAJ MUKHERJI District 33 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by: Assemblywomen Vainieri Huttle, Chaparro, Assemblymen Benson and Verrelli

SYNOPSIS

Establishes permanent unit in Office of Emergency Management to address access and functional needs of residents related to disasters and emergencies.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/20/2021)

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1 AN ACT concerning the provision of disaster and emergency related 2 assistance to State residents with access and functional needs and 3 supplementing chapter 9 of Appendix A. 4 5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State 6 of New Jersey: 7 8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that: 9 The COVID-19 pandemic has brought devastation to the a. 10 State of New Jersey, with hundreds of thousands of positive cases, high levels of hospitalization, and a tragic number of deaths. 11 12 b. The pandemic has had profound economic impacts across government 13 State, including to entities, non-profit the organizations, businesses of every size across all industries, 14 15 families, and individuals. 16 c. Heavily affected have been residents of New Jersey with disabilities, older adults, and other at-risk groups, many of whom 17 are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, as well as the 18 consequences of other types of emergencies and disasters. 19 20 d In 2018, the CDC estimated that 24.6% of New Jersey adult residents had a disability, which is a sizeable portion of the State's 21 22 population. 23 e. The economic impact on people with disabilities and their 24 families, as well as the burden on individual health from the 25 pandemic are an existential threat to the Disability community. 26 Protection of the State's vulnerable populations from the f. COVID-19 pandemic and other disasters or emergencies that may 27 take place in the future is a matter of urgency. 28 29 g. It is therefore in the public interest for the State to engage in 30 comprehensive planning and coordination within the northern, 31 central, and southern regions of the State to support residents with access and functional needs. 32 33 34 2 a The State Office of Emergency Management shall establish a unit in the office to serve the needs of State residents 35 with access and functional needs. The unit's responsibilities shall 36 37 include: 38 determining the needs of residents with access and (1)39 functional needs, before, during, and after disasters and 40 emergencies; 41 (2) determining the Statewide availability of relevant resources 42 and assistance; (3) assessing and addressing the ability of residents with access 43 44 and functional needs to access available resources and assistance; 45 and 46 (4) coordinating with county and local offices of emergency management and relevant resource providers to determine, expand, 47

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1 and implement best practices to be utilized in support of residents 2 with access and functional needs. 3 b. The unit shall consist of one full-time supervisor and a staff of three full-time planners to assist with the needs of the South, 4 5 Central, and North Jersey regions in serving State residents with access and functional needs. 6 7 c. For the purposes of this section, a "resident with access and 8 functional needs" means: 9 (1) a person with a disability; 10 (2) an older adult; 11 (3) a person with limited English proficiency; 12 (4) a person with limited access to transportation that would 13 enable the person to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of a disaster or emergency; and 14 15 (5) a person with limited access to financial resources that 16 would enable person to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and 17 mitigate the effects of a disaster or emergency. 18 19 3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month 20 next following the date of enactment, except that the State Office of 21 Emergency Management shall take any anticipatory action in 22 advance as shall be necessary for the implantation of this act. 23 24 25 **STATEMENT** 26 27 This bill requires the State Office of Emergency Management to establish a permanent unit in the office to serve the needs of State 28 29 residents with access and functional needs. The COVID-19 30 pandemic has had a profound effect on residents of New Jersey with 31 disabilities, older adults, and other at-risk groups, many of whom are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, as well as the 32 33 consequences of other types of disasters and emergencies. In 2018, the CDC estimated that 24.6% of New Jersey adult 34 35 residents had a disability, which is a sizeable portion of the State's population. The economic impact on people with disabilities and 36 37 their families, as well as the burden on individual health as a result of the pandemic are an existential threat to the Disability 38 39 community. Accordingly, it is in the public interest for the State to engage in comprehensive planning and coordination within the 40 northern, central, and southern regions of the State to support 41 residents with access and functional needs. 42 43 Under the provisions of the bill. The unit's responsibilities are to 44 include: 45 (1)determining the needs of residents with access and functional needs, before, during, and after disasters and 46 47 emergencies;

(2) determining the Statewide availability of relevant resources
 and assistance;

3 (3) assessing and addressing the ability of residents with access
4 and functional needs to access available resources and assistance;
5 and

6 (4) coordinating with county and local offices of emergency
7 management and relevant resource providers to determine, expand,
8 and implement best practices to be utilized in support of residents
9 with access and functional needs.

10 The bill provides that the unit would consist of one full-time 11 supervisor and a staff of three full-time planners to assist the needs 12 of the South, Central, and North Jersey regions to in serving the 13 State residents with access and functional needs.

14 The bill defines a "resident with access and functional needs" as:

15 (1) a person with a disability;

16 (2) an older adult;

17 (3) a person with limited English proficiency;

(4) a person with limited access to transportation that would
enable the person to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and
mitigate the effects of a disaster or emergency; and

(5) a person with limited access to financial resources that
would enable the person to prepare for, respond to, recover from,
and mitigate the effects of a disaster or emergency.