

SENATE, No. 375

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH P. CRYAN

District 20 (Union)

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Authorizes use of county inmate welfare funds for certain reentry services.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT concerning inmate welfare funds and supplementing
2 chapter 4 of Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

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

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7 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection k. of section
8 18 of P.L.1971, c.384 (C.30:4-1.1), a county correctional facility
9 may expend inmate welfare funds to provide or coordinate reentry
10 services for incarcerated inmates. These services may include, but
11 not be limited to, paying salaries of employees of the facility whose
12 duties include coordinating access to federal, State, or any other
13 available benefits or services that will assist inmates in successfully
14 reintegrating into the community upon release.

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16 2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month
17 next following enactment.

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STATEMENT

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22 This bill authorizes county correctional facilities to use inmate
23 welfare funds to provide or coordinate reentry services for inmates
24 incarcerated in the facility.

25 The sources of income of inmate welfare funds are sales at the
26 prison commissary, interest on welfare fund savings, gifts from
27 individuals, corporations and charitable foundations, and income
28 from inmate trust fund investments. The funds are maintained by
29 local boards of trustees. State regulations require the funds to be
30 used for amenities for the use, benefit, and general welfare of the
31 inmate population as a whole. These amenities include, but are not
32 limited to: recreation and sports equipment; television services;
33 awards for academic, vocational, and sporting achievements; library
34 books, movies, magazines, and other subscriptions; annual licensing
35 fees for a film blanket license visit; recreation, holiday, and inmate
36 incentive program decorations and food; stipends for referees and
37 guest speakers; and equipment to enhance the law library that is not
38 otherwise required for legal access.

39 This bill expands the use of these inmate welfare funds to
40 include reentry services for county inmates to assist them in
41 successfully transitioning into the community after they are released
42 from incarceration. The bill specifically authorizes the use of these
43 funds to pay salaries of employees in the facility whose duties
44 include assisting inmates in accessing available federal, State, or
45 other benefits or services, such as Medicaid, welfare, housing, and
46 substance abuse treatment.