

SENATE, No. 2173

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 16, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE
District 19 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires newborn infant screening for tongue tie.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning screening for tongue tie in newborn infants and
2 supplementing Title 26 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. a. All infants born in this State shall be tested for tongue tie.
8 b. The Commissioner of Health, pursuant to the
9 "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
10 seq.), shall adopt such rules and regulations as are necessary to
11 carry out the purposes of this section.

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13 2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month
14 next following the date of enactment, but the Commissioner of
15 Health may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance
16 thereof as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

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19 STATEMENT

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21 This bill requires that all infants born in this State be screened
22 for tongue tie, also known as "ankyloglossia" or "anchored tongue."

23 Tongue tie is a common but often overlooked condition. It is
24 seen at birth and causes a wide range of difficulties that affect the
25 sufferer in different ways. Diagnosis and assessment are essential
26 before taking any remedial action. The consequences of untreated
27 tongue tie are wide ranging and can affect the structure and
28 appearance of the face and teeth, as well as oral function.
29 Breastfeeding, eating, digestion, teeth, speech, kissing, and social
30 skills can be adversely affected. Some consequences, such as
31 breastfeeding difficulties, can be experienced early, but others, such
32 as speaking and kissing, only become apparent in later life.

33 The impact of a significant tongue tie on the ability of a baby to
34 be breastfed is very often severe. As a consequence, many mothers
35 who plan to breastfeed their babies are compelled to wean them to
36 the bottle much earlier than expected.

37 There are several options available when a tongue tie has been
38 assessed and found to be restricting movement, that is, when the
39 frenum (the string that connects the tongue to the floor of the
40 mouth) is recognized to be abnormal. This situation requires
41 surgical correction by an appropriate professional, which can be
42 performed as early as seven days after an infant's birth.

43 This bill takes effect on the first day of the fourth month after the
44 date of enactment, but authorizes the Commissioner of Health to
45 take prior administrative action as necessary for its implementation.