

[Corrected Copy]

FISCAL NOTE TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 773

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 12, 1997

Assembly Bill No. 773 of 1996 establishes mandatory, monthly psychological evaluations for all sex offenders who are released into the community supervision for life program. The bill also amends current law to clarify that the lifetime community supervision program applies to all persons presently incarcerated for specified sex offenses, not just those sentenced after the effective date of P.L.1994, c.130.

Under the provisions of the bill, all persons who are convicted of aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, aggravated criminal sexual contact, kidnaping which involves a child and sexual misconduct, endangering the welfare of a child by engaging in sexual conduct which would impair or debauch the morals of the child, or any attempt to commit any such offense would be required to participate in a special program of community supervision when they complete their term of incarceration. As part of the program, all the participating offenders are required to undergo monthly psychological evaluation. These evaluations are to be designed to determine whether there is a risk of re-offense on the part of the released offender or whether additional or specialized outpatient counseling, therapy or treatment is warranted.

The Department of Corrections states that during Calendar Year 1995, 450 sex offenders were released from the Department of Corrections who would have been subject to the provisions of this bill. Current law allows for release from lifetime community supervision after 15 years for offenders who have not committed a new crime. Assuming a yearly volume of 450 offenders, the full impact of the bill would occur after year 15 with 6,750 offenders subject to monthly psychological evaluations.

The department notes that current rates for psychological evaluations can vary from \$40 to \$1,000 per evaluation depending on the extensiveness of the evaluation, who is providing the service, and where the service is conducted. According to the department, a one-half hour psychiatric interview would cost around \$40. A full scale examination, including the administration, scoring and interpreting of psychiatric tests along with an interview would cost \$1,000. Since the bill is not specific about the scope of evaluation to be conducted, a more accurate assessment of costs cannot be provided.

The Department of Corrections is currently under contract with a private vendor to provide medical and psychiatric services to its inmates. Enactment of this bill would most likely prompt the imposition of an additional charge upon the department by the vendor to provide these services. The additional cost would be subject to negotiation between the Department of Corrections and the vendor, and cannot be projected at this point.

The Office of Legislative Services notes that based on the department's cost estimates of \$40 to \$1,000 per evaluation, and the ultimate number of offenders to be served by this program, the potential cost of the program could be between \$3.2 million and \$81 million depending upon the evaluation program selected and the psychological needs of the client population.

This fiscal note has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.