

ASSEMBLY COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2972

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 11, 1997

The Assembly Community Services Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2972.

As amended by committee, this bill requires that if a person who is a recipient of benefits under the Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) program established pursuant to P.L.1997, c.38 (C.44:10-55 et seq.) is incarcerated in a federal, State or county jail or place of detention, workhouse or penitentiary, the warden, administrator, sheriff or other person in charge of the penal facility, or designee, shall notify immediately, within 15 days after the recipient's incarceration, the welfare agency which administers the recipient's WFNJ benefits.

Presently, there is no form of notification to the local welfare agency if a recipient of WFNJ benefits is incarcerated. In some instances, public assistance funds for housing costs could be spent on a welfare recipient while he is incarcerated. This legislation is designed to address this situation by requiring the necessary notification.

The amendments expand the scope of the bill to include all recipients of benefits under the WFNJ New Jersey program, who may be incarcerated in either a federal, State or county jail or place of detention, workhouse or penitentiary. The amendments also clarify that notification of the incarceration of a recipient of WFNJ benefits shall occur within 15 days after the recipient's incarceration.

Additionally, the amendments authorize the Commissioners of Human Services and Corrections to require the cooperation of State, county, local and municipal penal facility administrative authorities to provide county or municipal welfare directors with notification of a WFNJ recipient's incarceration.

Finally, the amendments require the Commissioner of Human Services to develop and establish procedures in the Division of Family Development to request prisoner information for a person who is a recipient of benefits under WFNJ program.