

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5336

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 16, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5336 (1R).

This bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services (commissioner) to develop a payment program that provides travel budgets to persons diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The program is to permit individuals to use the travel budget to pay for travel on the New Jersey Transit Corporation regular route bus, rail, and light rail network, pay-per-ride trips provided through county transportation agencies, and transportation network company and taxi services with drivers that have completed Passenger Assistance, Safety, and Sensitivity (PASS) training.

The bill also requires the commissioner to develop rules and regulations that encourage the utilization of county transportation agency services for travel to and from day programs and employment sites, and for the department to coordinate with county transportation agencies to establish service to day programs and employment sites that are not currently served by county transportation agencies.

As reported, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 3441 (1R), which also was reported by the committee on this date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that the bill will have an indeterminate impact on State and local costs and revenues. The provision of individual travel budgets to persons diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities is unlikely to impact annual Department of Human Services (DHS) expenditures on transportation services, but will likely require State expenditures to develop and establish the individual travel budgets and payment structure. It will also likely change the trip distribution among transportation providers. Depending upon the level of State or local subsidy for trips provided by DHS funded providers, the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit), and county paratransit agencies, this change in trip distribution could result in an indeterminate increase or decrease in State and local revenues (ridership) and costs (trip subsidies). The

magnitude will depend on future choices made by persons about how they utilize their individual travel budgets that cannot be known at this point.

The cost of creating individual travel budgets will likely include some reliance on additional federal Medicaid/Medicare funds, a reallocation of State DHS funds, and possibly additional State funding to develop the system. The magnitude of these costs and impacts cannot be known due to a lack of knowledge about how the individual payment system will be designed and the internal capacity or reliance on outside vendors by the DHS in order to enact individual travel budgets.