

SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 4071

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 8, 2021

The Senate Transportation Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 4071.

As reported, this bill upgrades the penalty for all assaults on a motorbus or autobus operator, the operator's supervisor, and a rail passenger employee to, at minimum, third degree aggravated assault. A crime of the third degree is punishable by three to five years imprisonment, a maximum fine of \$15,000, or both.

The bill empowers the New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit), motorbus companies, and all rail passenger service providers to ban riders from their transportation services for up to one year if the person commits assault on a motorbus operator, the operator's supervisor, or a rail passenger employee. If a deadly weapon was used during the assault, the rider may be banned for life.

The bill requires that NJ Transit and motorbus companies equip each bus and rail and light rail vehicle with a communication system that allows the operator to alert the company or NJ Transit, as appropriate, and appropriate law enforcement agencies when the operator is in distress. The bill requires NJ Transit and motorbus companies to coordinate with law enforcement and transit police to help protect bus operators and rail employees on potentially problematic routes. The bill also requires NJ Transit and motorbus companies to establish an employee assistance program for bus operators and rail employees that have been assaulted and to provide periodic violence and mental health training to bus operators and rail employees.