

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

County Government with a Unified Voice!

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STATE HOUSE NEWS

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JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES

On May 28th, the Senate unanimously passed **S-1279** (*Greenstein D-14*), which would establish a “Youth Detention Task Force” as one of the Association’s top legislative priorities.

NJAC strongly supports this legislation and is grateful to Senator Greenstein for her leadership in introducing the measure, which would establish the Task Force to assess the current condition of youth detention in the State of New Jersey and recommend a system that best serves this population. In general, this important and timely measure would require the Task Force to recommend whether existing county youth detention facilities, facilities managed by the Youth Justice Commission, or an alternative system of detention would best serve the youth of this State. The bill would also permit the Task force to examine factors including, but not limited to, available resources, logistical considerations, safety protocols, staff training, rehabilitation opportunities, and security requirements.

With only one-third of the State’s twenty-one counties currently operating juvenile detention facilities, county governments across the State have been struggling to secure and maintain adequate housing and provide vital support services for juveniles taken into custody. County law enforcement officials, juvenile detention officers, social service professionals, and management attributes these struggles to a variety of factors that include an increase in serious crimes committed by juveniles, the housing of adults in juvenile detention facilities, inadequate staffing and training opportunities, lengthy case processing times, and a fragmented system for housing juveniles between counties that operate juvenile detention facilities and those that do not. The companion version **A-4680** (*Walker D-31*) is currently in the Assembly Public Safety and Preparedness Committee Awaiting consideration and NJAC is meeting with Committee Chairman Danielsen in early June to discuss the matter in detail.

JOB POSTINGS

Thank you to Senator Moriarity (*D-4*), for taking the time to address many of the concerns raised by stakeholders with **S-2161**, which would require employers to include certain information in job postings.

Although NJAC very much appreciates the changes made to the bill as introduced by Senator Moriarity, the Association testified before the Senate Labor Committee on May 11th that it remains concerned with the burden this legislation would impose on county governments as employers are already heavily regulated by collective bargaining agreements, civil service rules, statutory law, and more. County officials also contend that absent applicant tracking software, these proposed requirements would be difficult to implement and further submit that applicant tracking software would require time and money to build and integrate accordingly. The New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities (NJLM) joined NJAC in requesting the Committee to amend the bill to remove local governments from its requirements.

In summary, the Committee amended the bill to require an employer or a third-party job posting company to include in any posting for a publicly advertised job information concerning whether the posting is for an existing, vacant position, and remove a job posting when a position has been filled within two weeks after the position being filled or 30 days after the original posting, whichever is later. The measure would require that if the posting is for a position which is vacant, the employer or third-party job posting company is required to provide an estimated timeframe of when the position will be filled. The employer is required to make reasonable efforts to give notice that the position has been filled to any third-party job posting company that also posted the vacant position. An employer would not be liable for the continued display of a posting or advertisement by a third-party job posting company that was not created, controlled, or requested by the employer.

If the posting is for a position which is not vacant, the employer or third-party job posting company would be required to include a disclaimer that the employer is accepting applications for an anticipated vacancy. Such a posting and disclaimer would not be allowed unless the employer has, in the preceding 18 months, listed the same position at least three times or hired not less than four employees for similar roles. The posting and disclaimer would expire after 120 days and be removed. If the posting is for a seasonal position, the employer would be required to include a statement disclosing the anticipated employment season or period of employment and a disclaimer that the position is seasonal in nature.

The bill also requires third-party job posting companies to remove postings for positions that have been filled, and provides the Department of Labor and Workforce Development with the authority to audit employers and third-party job posting companies for ongoing violations. A person who violates the bill's provisions would be subject to a warning from the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development and provided seven business days to rectify the violation. If the violation is not rectified, a person would be liable to a penalty of not more than \$300 for a first offense and not more than \$600 for a subsequent offense. The Committee second referenced **S-2161** to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and the companion version **A-1161** (*Danielsen D-17*) is currently in the Commerce and Economic Development Committee awaiting consideration.

SNAP & MEDICAID FINANCIAL PLANNING SERVICES

On May 11th, NJAC testified before the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee in support of the changes the Committee made to **S-2955** (*Mukherji D-32*) and is grateful to Senator Mukherji for recognizing the challenges county welfare agencies face with managing the new Medicaid work requirements along with lowering Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) payment error rates under H.R. 1. As amended, the bill would direct the Commissioner of Human Services to require each county welfare agency located in the State to direct clients to, and promote the use of, the Department of the Treasury's free personal finance web-based platform. The bill as introduced would have required county welfare agencies to provide various financial planning services through a qualified financial planner. As such, NJAC respectfully requested the above change to make the measure more palatable for county welfare agencies to implement as it would avoid the need for funding and clarification on the role of a financial planner, while preserving the measure's intent to provide an important resource for those in need. The Committee favorably reported and second referenced **S-2955** to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for consideration and a companion version in the General Assembly does not exist at this time.

JOHN R. LEWIS VOTER EMPOWERMENT ACT

On May 21st, the Senate Judiciary Committee favorably reported **SCS 282** (*Turner D-15/Cyran D-20*), which would establish the "John R. Lewis Voter Empowerment Act of New Jersey" and appropriate \$2.5 million.

In summary, this bill would prohibit election officials from prescribing or maintaining voting or elections policies and practices that unnecessarily deny or abridge the right to vote. The bill would prohibit a local election office or political subdivision from using a method of election that has the effect of impairing the ability of members of a protected class to elect candidates of their choice or influence the outcome of elections, as a result of vote dilution. The bill would require that any policy or practice that burdens the right to vote must be narrowly tailored to promote a compelling interest and supported by substantial evidence. The bill provides criteria for determining if a violation of the bill has occurred, including if a voter's right to vote has been violated or if the voter has experienced vote dilution.

Although the measure would require the Attorney General to oversee implementation and enforcement of the bill's provisions, the Attorney General would still be authorized to provide guidance to local election officials with respect to their legal requirements and defend State election law. The bill would also require the Attorney General to adopt internal policies and procedures to screen for potential conflicts between these responsibilities. If a violation of the bill occurs, the bill would provide a remedy process, including for county and municipal apportionment and redistricting maps. The measure would further provide the Attorney General with certain preclearance powers, which is the process of reviewing an election-related policy, procedure, or practice prior to its implementation. The bill would require that covered entities

seek approval from the Attorney General prior to adopting or implementing any changes to voting procedures or qualifications within the jurisdiction. This would include voter registration and the maintenance of voter rolls, dates and methods of an election, assignment of election districts, early voting locations and polling place hours, and additional topics as designated by the Attorney General. Covered entities must also submit their at-large method of election and districting plans to the Attorney General for review and approval following a federal census.

The bill would provide for assistance to language-minority groups, where a local election office or a political subdivision that administers elections must provide language-related assistance in voting and elections to a language-minority group in a political subdivision based on data from the United States Census Bureau American Community Survey, or data of comparable quality collected by a State, county, or local public office, if: more than two percent, but in no instance fewer than 100 individuals, of citizens of voting age of a political subdivision that speak a particular shared language other than English and are limited English proficient; or more than 4,000 of citizens of voting age of a political subdivision that speak a particular shared language other than English and are limited English proficient. Under the bill, any aggrieved persons' or organization whose membership includes aggrieved persons or members of a protected class, may file an action accordingly; and upon finding a violation, a court may order any remedy necessary to cure the violation. The bill would also provide the Attorney General with the authority to determine relevant facts and issue subpoenas in accordance with the civil and criminal laws of this State. The Committee favorably reported **SCS 282** and the companion version **A-1715** (*Reynolds Jackson D-15*) to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for consideration.

PATIENT AND PROVIDER PROTECTION ACT

On May 18th, the General Assembly passed by a vote of 59-18 **A-5102** (*Freiman D-16/Singh D-7*), which would establish the "Patient and Provider Protection Act."

In summary, the bill would establish certain requirements for pharmacy benefits managers relating to contractual agreements with manufacturers and pharmacies. Under the bill, pharmacy benefits managers would have a fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of the carrier with which it contracts. This would include contracts between pharmacy benefits managers and the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP), School Employees' Health Benefits Program (NJSEHBP), and NJ Family Care, the State's Medicaid program. The bill would also prohibit pharmacy benefits managers from engaging in any marketing activity that uses inaccurate or misleading information to convince or attempt to convince covered persons to use a contracted or network pharmacy. The bill would stipulate that an agreement between a pharmacy benefits manager and a manufacturer is not valid if the contract conditions any rebate on the exclusion of generic drugs from coverage. The measure would also require pharmacy benefits managers, for a prescription drug, to reimburse the State fee-for-service benchmark of the National Average Drug Acquisition Cost (NADAC) plus the prevailing State defined Medicaid professional dispensing fee. If the NADAC is not established for a specific national drug code, the ingredient reimbursement rate

shall default to the Wholesale Average Cost, or the Suggested Wholesale Price. This reimbursement rate would not apply to pharmacies in which a pharmacy benefits manager or its affiliate maintains an ownership interest or control.

The bill would stipulate that a pharmacy benefits manager may not engage in differential payment pricing. A pharmacy benefits manager would be required to reimburse all contracted pharmacies at the same rate regardless of ownership or affiliation. Additionally, a pharmacy benefits manager would be prohibited from deriving income from pharmacy benefits management services provided to a carrier or health benefits plan in this State except for income derived from a pharmacy benefits management fee that is agreed upon between the pharmacy benefits manager and carrier or health benefits plan. The pharmacy benefits management fee charged or paid to a pharmacy benefits manager from a carrier or health benefits plan must not be directly or indirectly based or contingent upon: the acquisition cost or any other price metric of a drug; the amount of savings, rebates, or other fees charged, realized, or collected by or generated based on the activity of the pharmacy benefits manager; or the amount of premiums, deductibles, or other cost sharing or fees charged, realized, or collected by the pharmacy benefits manager from patients or other persons on behalf of a patient. Finally, under the bill, a pharmacy benefits manager would be prohibited from providing a recommendation, advice, or counsel to a plan sponsor or carrier concerning the inclusion of a prescription drug in a formulary system, or in a particular tier of the formulary system, that places a prescription drug with a higher cost to the patient, including but not limited to coinsurance, copayments, deductibles, and other cost-sharing, in a more favorable position than a generic or biosimilar prescription drug with a lower cost, if the recommendation, advice, or counsel is based solely on the cost of the prescription drug and not on another factor.

NJAC is currently monitoring this legislation as it's unclear how it would impact health benefit expenses. Pursuant to a fiscal estimate conducted by the Office of Legislative Services (OLS), *the bill would have an indeterminate impact on State expenditures related to employee health insurance and for expenditures related to NJ Family care, the State's Medicaid program. The bill would also have an indeterminate impact on local government expenditures, including school districts, related to the purchase of employee health insurance. Some of the bill's provisions would potentially increase the cost of these health plans while others would potentially lower costs. The OLS lacks the informational basis to quantify the magnitude of these impacts. The State Health Benefits Program, the School Employees' Health Benefits Program, and NJ FamilyCare, the State's Medicaid program, are all covered by the provisions of the bill.* The companion version **S-2345** (McKeon D-27/Gopal D-11) is currently in the Senate Commerce Committee awaiting consideration.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR DISABLED VETERANS

On May 13th, the Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee favorably reported **A-1040** (DeAngelo D-14/Tucker D-28), which would provide for an expansion of county transportation services to include disabled veterans.

In summary, this bill would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (DOVA) to coordinate with county governments an expansion of the service provided under the Senior Citizens and Disabled Residents Transportation Assistance Program (SCDRTAP) to provide disabled veterans with transportation to and from medical counseling appointments for service-connected conditions within the State. The DOVA would help counties identify transportation service needs in the veteran community for the purposes outlined in the bill and provide financial assistance to the counties to cover the cost of such service expansions.

The bill would define "disabled veteran" to mean any citizen and resident of this State now or hereafter honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active service in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States, a Reserve component thereof, or the National Guard and who has been or will be declared by the United States Veterans Administration, or its successor, to have a service-connected disability. The measure would require four percent of the amount appropriated under current law to the New Jersey Transit Corporation from the Casino Revenue Fund to be used for the issuance of grants to counties for the purpose of providing transportation services to disabled veterans to and from medical counseling appointments for service-connected conditions, across county boundaries, but within the State. The companion version **S-1229** (*Greenstein D-14/Lagana D-38*) is currently in the Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee awaiting consideration.

LIBRARY COOPERATIVES

On May 11th, the Assembly State and Local Government Committee reported favorably **A-4527** (*Karabinchak D-18*), which would exempt local library cooperatives from certain provisions of the Local Public Contracts Law. In summary, this bill would exclude local library cooperatives from the definition of "contracting unit" under the Local Public Contracts Law and would exempt goods and services provided such cooperatives from the public bidding process. However, the measure would require local library cooperatives to comply with the Local Public Contracts Law for all construction and infrastructure-related projects. Under the bill, a "local library cooperative" would mean a group of libraries or library-related agencies that exclusively provide cooperative or reciprocal library services, access to technology, and facilitate the sharing of resources. The Committee second referenced the legislation to the Assembly Oversight, Reform and Federal Relations Committee and the companion version **S-3107** (*Wimberly D-35*) is currently in the Senate community and Urban Affairs Committee.

NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
75th Annual Celebration of County Government
County Service Award & Vo-Tech Cook-Off Challenge Winners 2026

MAURICE FITZGIBBONS COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF THE YEAR AWARD

- SHANEL ROBINSON, SOMERSET COUNTY COMMISSIONER DIRECTOR
For her sage advice, trusted counsel, and remarkable leadership during a year as President where the Association excelled and flourished.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

- GERALD DEL ROSSO, ATLANTIC COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
For his lifelong and unwavering dedication to public service and for always being a kind, thoughtful, and resourceful gentleman.

NJAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

- BRENDAN GILL, ESSEX COUNTY COMMISSIONER
For his extraordinary commitment to county government that provided the Association with a critical voice at the table during the Murphy Administration.

COUNTY SERVICE AWARDS

- MICHAEL FITZGERALD, MONMOUTH COUNTY COUNSEL
For his exceptional leadership in spearheading countywide litigation initiatives, analyzing legislation and regulations, and sharing resources and ideas.
- JARED LAUTZ, BERGEN COUNTY DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
For his steadfast and selfless commitment to helping others that has greatly benefitted the lives of those struggling with homelessness and food insecurity.
- SHELLY BELL, SOMERSET COUNTY CHIEF OF STAFF
For her positivity and enthusiasm in always going the extra mile to collaborate with others for the good of county government.
- ART CHARLTON, WARREN COUNTY DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
For being brilliant at his craft and a remarkable career in public service that spanned three impactful and meaningful decades.

PETER PALMER BUSINESS ASSOCIATE OF THE YEAR

- **FOUR LEAF FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**
For their tremendous support of the Association and for having an outstanding team that energizes all events and functions.

COUNTY VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL COOK-OFF CHALLENGE - PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS

As voted on by all participating conference attendees and tabulated by ES&S.

- **GOLD MEDAL** (\$1,250.00 SCHOLARSHIP): CAPE MAY COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Cape May Clam Cake
- **SILVER MEDAL** (\$750.00 SCHOLARSHIP): CAMDEN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Crispy Chicken Sliders
- **BRONZE MEDAL** (\$500.00 SCHOLARSHIP): PASSAIC COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Crispy Saffron Arancini with Breaded Chicken

COUNTY VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL COOK-OFF CHALLENGE - PROFESSIONAL CHEFS AWARDS

As voted on by professional chefs David Burke, Man Versus Food Star Casey Webb, and the Meat Teacher Matt Groark.

- **GOLD MEDAL TASTE**: CAPE MAY COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Cape May Claim Cake
- **SILVER MEDAL TASTE**: PASSAIC COUNTY TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS
Crispy Saffron Arancini with Breaded Chicken
- **BRONZE MEDAL TASTE**: BERGEN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, PARAMUS
BBQ Brisket Biscuit
- **GOLD MEDAL FOOD PRESENTATION**: CAPE MAY COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Cape May Clam Cake
- **SILVER MEDAL FOOD PRESENTATION**: ESSEX COUNTY SCHOOLS OF TECHNOLOGY, WEST CALDWELL
Steak & Egg Sandwich
- **BRONZE MEDAL FOOD PRESENTATION**: MONMOUTH COUNTY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Arepas Con Queso

COUNTY VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL COOK-OFF CHALLENGE - NJAC JUDGES AWARDS

As voted on by selected conference attendees from the business community.

- GOLD MEDAL TASTE: CAMDEN COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Crispy Chicken Sliders

- SILVER MEDAL TASTE: CAPE MAY COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Cape May Clam Cake

- BRONZE MEDAL TASTE: HUDSON COUNTY SCHOOLS OF TECHNOLOGY
Mini Pretzel Pork & Chive Dumpling

- GOLD MEDAL STATION DISPLAY: CAPE MAY TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
Cape May Clam Cake

- SILVER MEDAL STATION DISPLAY: GLOUCESTER COUNTY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Savory Macarons

- BRONZE MEDAL STATION DISPLAY: PASSAIC COUNTY TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS
Crispy Saffron Arancini with Breaded Chicken

Additional fantastic dishes included: Potato & Cheese Pierogies by the Mercer County Technical Schools; Barnegat Light Butter Poached Lobster by the Ocean County Vocational-Technical School Districts; and, Sweet and Smoky Duck Breast on a Sourdough Cracker by the Warren County Technical School.

Our life is what our thoughts make of it. Marcus Aurelius