

ASSEMBLY AGING AND SENIOR SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4626

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 13, 2022

The Assembly Aging and Senior Services Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4626.

This bill would authorize an entity that manages public housing for seniors to establish and implement procedures for the collection of emergency contact information for each resident of each dwelling unit. The bill defines “public housing for seniors” to mean low-income, subsidized housing for individuals 55 years of age and older. The emergency contact information collected and retained would include that of the resident’s next-of-kin, and preferred contact in the event of an emergency.

The bill would require an entity to provide notice to, and opportunity for, each current and prospective resident to provide upon signing a lease or a rental agreement, and update annually, emergency contact information. The information would be used to provide notice in the event of the hospitalization or death of a resident. The entity would also be authorized to provide a resident’s emergency contact information to emergency personnel, upon request. The provisions of the bill are not to be construed to authorize an entity to use a resident’s emergency contact information for any other purposes than those associated with an emergency of the resident.

The bill directs the Commissioner of Community Affairs, in consultation with the Commissioners of Health and Human Services, to adopt regulations on the collection of emergency contact information and the notification of the emergency contacts as required by the bill. The bill would take effect on the first day of the fifth month next following enactment.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments remove the terms “age-restricted community” and “association” from the bill. Under the amended bill, an entity that manages public housing for seniors is to establish and implement procedures for the collection of emergency contact information for each resident of each dwelling unit. The bill defines “public housing for seniors” to mean low-income, subsidized housing for individuals 55 years of age and older. The committee amendments update the bill’s synopsis to reflect these changes.

The committee amendments require an entity that manages public housing for seniors to provide each current and prospective resident with the notice and opportunity to share emergency contact information upon signing a lease or a rental agreement with the entity and to update annually thereafter. As introduced, the bill does not stipulate when emergency contact information is to be gathered.

The committee amendments provide that an entity is to provide a resident's emergency contact information to emergency personnel, upon request. Moreover, the amendments explicitly state that the provisions of the bill are not to be construed to authorize an entity to use a resident's emergency contact information for any other purposes than those associated with an emergency of the resident.

Finally, the committee amendments remove provisions of the bill that establish a timeline to contact a resident's emergency contact upon the hospitalization or death of the resident, as well as provisions that establish penalties for non-compliance with this timeline.