

# LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

## SENATE, No. 139

### STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: MAY 31, 2022

#### SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Allows parent or primary caregiver of person with autism to apply for use of reserved parking zones.
- Type of Impact:** Annual increases in State expenditures.
- Agencies Affected:** New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission.

#### Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
<b>State Expenditure Increase</b>	\$1 million - \$10 million	Less than \$100,000	Less than \$100,000

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds that the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) will incur one-time costs of between \$1 million and \$10 million to design and produce new identification cards and windshield placards for a parent or primary caregiver of a person with autism. The upfront expenditures will consist of these initial design and production costs as well as the cost of incorporating the card into existing MVC information technology (IT) systems for parking for persons with disabilities, payment systems, and record management systems. The magnitude of these costs are uncertain due to the lack of information about how the program will be implemented and the associated IT hardware and software costs, including the potential impacts on other active MVC contracts that would share software with this new identification card.
- The bill would also result in annual MVC cost increases of less than \$100,000 for issuing new identification cards and placards. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that the State has a childhood autism diagnosis rate of approximately 2.8 percent. Historically, this number has increased over time. It is not clear what portion of individuals in the State, some newly, currently, or yet to be diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, would qualify for identification cards and placards.

## **BILL DESCRIPTION**

The bill provides that the MVC is to issue, at the expense of the State of New Jersey, person with autism identification cards upon the application of a parent or primary caregiver of a person with autism following an investigation of the qualifying status of the person with autism. The card is to state that it is for the exclusive use of the person with autism and the person's parent or primary caregiver to whom it has been issued, is nontransferable, and will be forfeited if presented by any other person, and that any abuse will be sufficient cause for revocation and forfeiture.

The MVC is also required to issue to an applicant who is a parent or primary caregiver of a person with autism a windshield placard. The windshield placard is to be displayed in a manner as determined by the chief administrator on the motor vehicle used to transport the person with autism, when the vehicle is parked overtime or in special parking places established for use by persons with disabilities. Any windshield placard is to display the date on which it is to become invalid.

The bill further clarifies that a person who is the primary caregiver, in addition to a person who is an immediate family member, of a person with a disability is entitled to park in a restricted parking zone in front of a residence occupied by the person, if such parking is permitted by the municipality.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

### ***EXECUTIVE BRANCH***

None received.

### ***OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES***

The OLS concludes that the design and production of a new autism identification card and special parking placard for the parents and caregivers of persons with autism will result in a one-time cost to the MVC of between \$1 million and \$10 million and subsequent annual costs of less than \$100,000.

The MVC has previously estimated that special notations on identification cards would cost the MVC between \$50,000 to \$200,000; however, the cost for developing completely new identification cards independent of an existing non-driver identification card has not been estimated recently. The cost would likely fall between \$1 million and \$10 million given the cost of other major MVC IT projects related to other license-related upgrades. It is worth noting that the exact cost cannot be determined without more information about how the program will be implemented. The cost could vary greatly depending on the amount of work necessary to establish the new identification card program.

In addition to any upfront costs, there will be ongoing costs of issuing the new identification cards and parking placards. The current cost to consumers for a non-driver identification card issued by the MVC is \$24. It is not clear how many annual applications would be made for the new identification card. Assuming that approximately 100,000 children will be screened per year, with a diagnosis rate of 2.8 percent, approximately 3,000 children per year would be newly diagnosed with autism. Of that number, it is not clear how many individuals would qualify under the program to receive an identification card and special parking placard. If all 3,000 children qualify, the annual cost of the program would be \$72,000 assuming a cost to the State of \$24 per identification card.

There are an unknown number of people in the State that are currently diagnosed with autism or who have not yet been diagnosed with autism that may be eligible for the new identification card and special parking placard. Whether and when this subset of people applies for an identification card and special parking placard could result in costs exceeding the aforementioned \$72,000 annual cost of the program.

*Section: Authorities, Utilities, Transportation and Communications*

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This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).