

SENATE STATE GOVERNMENT, WAGERING, TOURISM &
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2947

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 17, 2024

The Senate State Government, Wagering, Tourism & Historic Preservation Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 2947.

As amended by the committee, this bill prohibits the acceptance, offer, or provision of monetary or non-monetary compensation of mail-in ballot messengers or bearers, and allows certain facility employees and volunteers to serve as messengers or bearers.

Under current law, messengers are authorized through an application process to deliver blank mail-in ballots to qualified voters who are either family members or residents of the same county. Once a ballot is completed by a voter, a bearer may deliver a limited number of voted ballots from voters back to the county board of elections, to a ballot drop box, or to a regular mailbox.

Under this bill, a person who serves as an authorized messenger or bearer would be prohibited from accepting any monetary or non-monetary compensation to serve as an authorized messenger or bearer, and prohibits any person to offer or provide monetary or non-monetary compensation to a person to serve as an authorized messenger or bearer. A person who serves as an authorized messenger or bearer may receive a reimbursement for transportation costs associated with transporting a ballot as the authorized messenger or bearer.

In addition, the bill provides that an employee or volunteer of:
an organization exempt from federal taxation pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C.s.501(c)(3);

an acute care general hospital licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.);

a nursing home, assisted living residence, comprehensive personal care home, residential health care facility, or dementia care home licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.); or

a veterans' memorial home supervised and operated by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs,

may serve as an authorized messenger or as a bearer for a voter if no monetary or non-monetary compensation is provided to the employee or volunteer to serve as an authorized messenger or bearer that is in addition to the compensation typical for their regular employment or volunteer duties, except for reimbursements provided for transportation costs associated with transporting a ballot as the authorized messenger or bearer, as permitted by the bill.

Under the bill, “non-monetary compensation” means, but would not be limited to, goods, services, or intangible property.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments:

(1) prohibit the acceptance by a person who serves as an authorized messenger or bearer of any monetary or non-monetary compensation to serve as such;

(2) prohibit any person to offer or provide monetary or non-monetary compensation to a person to serve as an authorized messenger or bearer;

(3) allow a person who serves as an authorized messenger or bearer to receive a reimbursement for transportation costs associated with transporting a ballot as the authorized messenger or bearer;

(4) provide that an employee or volunteer of:

an organization exempt from federal taxation pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C.s.501(c)(3);

an acute care general hospital licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.);

a nursing home, assisted living residence, comprehensive personal care home, residential health care facility, or dementia care home licensed pursuant to P.L.1971, c.136 (C.26:2H-1 et seq.); or

a veterans’ memorial home supervised and operated by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs,

may serve as an authorized messenger or as a bearer for a voter if no monetary or non-monetary compensation is provided to the employee or volunteer to serve as an authorized messenger or bearer that is in addition to the compensation typical for their regular employment or volunteer duties, except for reimbursements provided for transportation costs associated with transporting a ballot as the authorized messenger or bearer, as permitted by the bill; and

(5) define “non-monetary compensation” to mean, but would not be limited to, goods, services, or intangible property.