

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1729

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE**

DATED: JANUARY 30, 2023

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires Attorney General to address human trafficking in underserved communities.
- Type of Impact:** Potential annual State cost increase.
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Law and Public Safety.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
Potential State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that this legislation should not result in an increase in State expenditures as the bill requires the Attorney General to allocate and utilize resources in the Department of Law and Public Safety to perform functions designed to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of human trafficking victims in underserved communities. Absent information from the department, however, the OLS cannot anticipate the resources the department would allocate.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the Attorney General to address human trafficking related to members of underserved communities, particularly girls and women of color, by allocating and utilizing resources in the Department of Law and Public Safety to perform functions designed to address specific needs and vulnerabilities.

The bill provides that the responsibilities would include, but not be limited to: (1) coordinating with the State and municipal and county law enforcement agencies to investigate cases related to human trafficking in underserved communities; (2) coordinating with relevant government entities, including, but not limited to the Victims of Crime Compensation Office and the Commission on Human Trafficking, and community-based organizations to create and administer

programs to connect victims to appropriate and effective information and resources; and (3) collecting and maintaining data related to human trafficking cases and trends concerning members of underserved communities.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS concludes that this legislation should not result in an increase in State expenditures as the bill requires the Attorney General to address human trafficking related to members of underserved communities, particularly girls and women of color, by allocating and utilizing resources in the Department of Law and Public Safety to perform functions designed to address specific needs and vulnerabilities.

The OLS notes that the current State of New Jersey Human Trafficking Task Force, affiliated with the Attorney General and the Division of Criminal Justice, may add the bill's requirements to the task force's current mission. The current goals of the Human Trafficking Task Force are to: 1) train and assist law enforcement in methods of identifying victims and signs of trafficking to disrupt and interdict this activity; 2) coordinate Statewide efforts in the identification and provision of services to victims of human trafficking; and 3) increase the successful interdiction and prosecution of trafficking of human persons. Depending on the department's resource allocation policies, the added workload may or may not augment State administrative expenditures. Absent information from the Department of Law and Public Safety, however, the OLS cannot anticipate the resources the department would allocate.

Human Trafficking Background - Human trafficking is the second-largest criminal industry in the world and is prevalent in every state in the United States. New Jersey is considered particularly vulnerable to the proliferation of human trafficking due to its dense population and location along the I-95 corridor. In 2020 alone, there were 146 reported cases to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in New Jersey. These numbers only reflect cases identified through the hotline and do not include cases identified by hospitals, law enforcement, social service agencies, and others who help survivors directly without reporting.

During a 2022 Assembly Homeland Security and State Preparedness Committee meeting, a representative from the New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence indicated that women are the most likely to be sex trafficked, accounting for 94 percent of cases. Of those cases, 40 percent were Black, and 24 percent were Latina. During the same meeting, a representative from the Department of Law and Public Safety who works with a human trafficking task force out of the State Attorney General's Office indicated that roughly 100 human trafficking cases had been prosecuted in New Jersey from 2017-2022.

Section: Law and Public Safety

Analyst: Kristin Brunner Santos
Lead Fiscal Analyst

Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

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.).