State of New Jersey
220th Legislature

Introduced February 14, 2022

Sponsored by:
Senator M. Teresa Ruiz
District 29 (Essex)

Synopsis
Establishes the “New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Commission” and appropriates $9 million.

Current Version of Text
As introduced.
AN ACT establishing the “New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Commission” and making an appropriation.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Commission Act.”

2. As used in this act:
“COVID-19” means the coronavirus disease 2019 caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
“COVID-19 vaccine” means a vaccine authorized by the federal Food and Drug Administration for the prevention of COVID-19.
“State agencies” means any executive agency or department directly responsible to the Governor.

3. a. There is created in, but not of, the Department of State, the “New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Commission.”
b. The commission shall consist of 27 members as follows:
   (1) the President of the Senate, or a designee;
   (2) the Speaker of the General Assembly, or a designee;
   (3) the Minority Leader of the Senate, or a designee;
   (4) the Minority Leader of the General Assembly, or a designee;
   (5) two members of the New Jersey Legislative Latino Caucus, one of whom shall be a member of the Senate and one of whom shall be a member of the General Assembly, to be appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the General Assembly, respectively, at the recommendation of the caucus chairperson;
   (6) two members of the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus, one of whom shall be a member of the Senate and one of whom shall be a member of the General Assembly, to be appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the General Assembly, respectively, at the recommendation of the caucus chairperson;
   (7) the Governor, or a designee;
   (8) the Secretary of State, or a designee;
   (9) the Commissioner of the Department of Health, or a designee;
   (10) three individuals representing municipalities in this State, reflecting the geographic diversity of the State, appointed by the Secretary of State;
   (11) four individuals representing counties in this State, reflecting the geographic diversity of the State, appointed by the Governor;
   (12) one representative each from four different organizations representing the interests of minorities in the State, appointed by the Secretary of State;
(13) one representative each from three different organizations representing the interests of business in the State, including one organization representing minority business interests, appointed by the Governor; and

(14) two individuals representing community-based, philanthropic, non-profit, educational, civic, and faith-based organizations, appointed by the Secretary of State.

c. No more than 14 of the members appointed to the commission shall be of the same political party, as determined by the member’s political party affiliation during the one year preceding the member’s appointment to the commission.

4. All appointments to the commission shall be made within 30 days after the date of enactment of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made. Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the commission for its purposes.

5. The commission shall organize within 30 days after the appointment of its members. The Secretary of State shall serve as chairperson of the commission. The commission shall select a vice chairperson from among its members. The commission may also appoint a secretary, a director, and an assistant director, who need not be a member of the commission. The director and assistant director may be compensated from funds made available to the commission for this purpose. The commission shall meet at the call of the chairperson, or upon the request of any 14 members of the commission, who shall constitute a quorum.

6. The Department of State shall provide the staff services necessary to support the functions of the commission. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any other State department, board, bureau, commission or agency, as it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

7. It shall be the duty of the commission to develop, recommend, and assist in the administration of a COVID-19 vaccine outreach strategy to encourage the population of New Jersey to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine outreach strategy shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a. State agency initiatives to encourage vaccination;

b. the establishment and support of school-based outreach programs;
c. partnerships with non-profit community-based organizations;

d. a multi-lingual and multi-cultural multi-media campaign with
information that may be widely disseminated through print, audio,
television, the Internet, and social media in this State among all of its
diverse populations and communities on the importance of receiving
the COVID-19 vaccination and the resources available to do so; and

e. ensuring that populations with historically low vaccination
rates are included in the outreach efforts.

To assist in carrying out its duties, the commission may create and
appoint subcommittees as it deems appropriate and shall solicit
participation from relevant experts and practitioners involved in mass
vaccination initiatives.

8. The outreach strategy of the New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine
Outreach Commission shall be coordinated through the Office of
the Secretary of State, which shall provide administrative support to
the commission and coordinate with all State agencies and
constitutional officers, as well as units of local government, to
identify effective methods of outreach to New Jersey’s population
and to provide resources to ensure the outreach program is
successful. All State agencies shall inform the Office of the
Secretary of State of their designated COVID-19 vaccine outreach
coordinator and cooperate with the commission and provide support
to the commission. Other entities of government, including other
constitutional officers, the offices of the legislative and judicial
branches, and units of local government shall cooperate and provide
all reasonable assistance to the commission.

9. There is appropriated to the “New Jersey COVID-19
Vaccine Outreach Commission” from the General Fund the sum of
$9,000,000 to effectuate the provisions of this act. Any unexpended
funds from this amount appropriated shall be transferred to the State
Treasury upon the expiration of this act.

10. The commission shall submit an interim report to the
Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,
c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), within six months of its organizational
meeting, containing its recommended outreach strategy to
encourage COVID-19 vaccination. Thereafter, the commission shall
submit its final report to the Governor and to the Legislature no
later than June 30, 2022, specifying its recommended COVID-19
vaccine outreach strategy.

The commission shall expire on January 1, 2023.

11. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire on
January 1, 2023.
This bill, the “New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Commission Act,” establishes the “New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Commission” in, but not of, the Department of State.

The commission will consist of 27 members as follows: (1) the President of the Senate, or a designee; (2) the Speaker of the General Assembly, or a designee; (3) the Minority Leader of the Senate, or a designee; (4) the Minority Leader of the General Assembly, or a designee; (5) two members of the New Jersey Legislative Latino Caucus, one of whom will be a member of the Senate and one of whom will be a member of the General Assembly, to be appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the General Assembly, respectively, at the recommendation of the caucus chairperson; (6) two members of the New Jersey Legislative Black Caucus, one of whom will be a member of the Senate and one of whom will be a member of the General Assembly, to be appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the General Assembly, respectively, at the recommendation of the caucus chairperson; (7) the Governor, or a designee; (8) the Secretary of State, or a designee; (9) the Commissioner of the Department of Health, or a designee; (10) three individuals representing municipalities in this State, reflecting the geographic diversity of the State, appointed by the Secretary of State; (11) four individuals representing counties in this State, reflecting the geographic diversity of the State, appointed by the Governor; (12) one representative each from four different organizations representing the interests of minorities in the State, appointed by the Secretary of State; (13) one representative each from three different organizations representing the interests of business in the State, including one organization representing minority business interests, appointed by the Governor; and (14) two individuals representing community-based, philanthropic, nonprofit, educational, civic, and faith-based organizations, appointed by the Secretary of State.

The duty of the commission is to develop, recommend, and assist in the administration of a COVID-19 vaccine outreach strategy to encourage the population of New Jersey to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine outreach strategy will include, but not be limited to, the following: State agency initiatives to encourage vaccination; the establishment and support of school-based outreach programs; partnerships with non-profit community-based organizations; a multi-lingual and multi-cultural multi-media campaign with information that may be widely disseminated through print, audio, television, the Internet, and social media in this State among all of its diverse populations and communities on the importance of receiving the COVID-19 vaccination and the resources available to do so; and ensuring that populations with
historically low vaccination rates are included in the outreach efforts.

To assist in carrying out its duties, the commission may create and appoint subcommittees as it deems appropriate and will solicit participation from relevant experts and practitioners involved in mass vaccination initiatives.

The bill requires the outreach strategy to be coordinate through the Office of the Secretary of State, which will provide administrative support to the commission and coordinate with all State agencies and constitutional officers, as well as units of local government, to identify effective methods of outreach to New Jersey’s population and to provide resources to ensure the outreach program is successful. All State agencies are required to inform the Office of the Secretary of State of their designated COVID-19 vaccine outreach coordinator and cooperate with the commission and provide support to the commission. Other entities of government, including other constitutional officers, the offices of the legislative and judicial branches, and units of local government are required to cooperate and provide all reasonable assistance to the commission.

The bill appropriates to the “New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Commission” from the General Fund the sum of $9,000,000 to effectuate the provisions of this act. Any unexpended funds from this amount appropriated will be transferred to the State Treasury upon the expiration of this act.

The commission is required to submit an interim report to the Governor and to the Legislature within six months of its organizational meeting, containing its recommended outreach strategy to encourage COVID-19 vaccination. Thereafter, the commission will submit its final report to the Governor and to the Legislature no later than June 30, 2022, specifying its recommended COVID-19 vaccine outreach strategy.

The commission will expire on January 1, 2023.