

ASSEMBLY, No. 1178

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY
District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Requires feasibility study to examine establishment of regional medical examiner office facility in Southern New Jersey and collaborative development of new medical examiner education initiatives; appropriates \$40,000.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** establishing a feasibility study related to medical examiner
2 services and training in Southern New Jersey and making an
3 appropriation.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

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8 1. a. The Office of the Chief State Medical Examiner shall
9 contract with an appropriate entity to conduct a feasibility study
10 related to addressing the needs and enhancing the operations of the
11 Office of the Chief State Medical Examiner in the southern region
12 of the State. The feasibility study shall examine:

13 (1) the development of a regional State Medical Examiner's
14 Office facility in the southern region of the State, which shall
15 include an assessment of:

16 (a) the anticipated need for a regional facility, including a
17 determination of the likelihood that the State Medical Examiner's
18 Office will assume jurisdiction over additional county medical
19 examiner offices;

20 (b) the size of facility that would be needed to meet regional
21 needs, including the size of the physical plant and anticipated
22 staffing needs;

23 (c) the advantages and disadvantages of establishing morgue
24 facilities and administrative offices in a single location;

25 (d) the advantages and disadvantages of constructing a new
26 facility as opposed to adapting an existing facility for this purpose;

27 (e) the costs of acquiring and maintaining a computerized
28 tomography scanner; and

29 (f) the advantages and disadvantages of accommodating on-site
30 forensic testing services, as well as partnering with one or more
31 institutions of higher education to facilitate data collection and
32 research with the goal of informing public health policy;

33 (2) collaboration with one or more medical schools operating in
34 the southern region of the State to establish a forensic medical
35 examiner fellowship program, develop a death investigation
36 program for medicolegal investigators and law enforcement,
37 enhance education and training for medical students and medical
38 residents related to forensic medical examination, establish new
39 graduate and undergraduate courses in forensic medical
40 examination, and invest in and expand graduate and undergraduate
41 courses in the forensic sciences in New Jersey institutions of higher
42 education; and

43 (3) any legislation, administrative action, or other governmental
44 action that may be needed to implement any recommendations
45 included in the report produced from the feasibility study.

46 b. The Office of the State Medical Examiner shall transmit a

1 copy of the report produced from the feasibility study conducted
2 pursuant to subsection a. of this section to the Governor and,
3 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the
4 Legislature.

5 c. There is appropriated to the Office of the Chief State
6 Medical Examiner from the General Fund the sum of \$40,000 for
7 the purposes of contracting with an appropriate entity to conduct the
8 feasibility study required under this section.

9
10 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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13 STATEMENT
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15 This bill requires the Office of the Chief State Medical Examiner
16 (Office) to contract with an appropriate entity to conduct a
17 feasibility study related to addressing the needs and enhancing the
18 operations of the Office in the southern region of the State.

19 Specifically, the feasibility study will examine:

20 1) the development of a regional Chief State Medical Examiner
21 Office facility in the southern region of the State, including an
22 assessment of: the anticipated need for a regional facility; the size
23 of facility that would be needed to meet regional needs, including
24 the size of the physical plant and anticipated staffing needs; the
25 advantages and disadvantages of establishing morgue facilities and
26 administrative offices in a single location; the advantages and
27 disadvantages of constructing a new facility as opposed to adapting
28 an existing facility for this purpose; the costs of acquiring and
29 maintaining a computerized tomography scanner; and the
30 advantages and disadvantages of accommodating on-site forensic
31 testing services, as well as partnering with one or more institutions
32 of higher education to facilitate data collection and research with
33 the goal of informing public health policy; and

34 2) collaboration with one or more medical schools operating in
35 the southern region of the State to establish a forensic medical
36 examiner fellowship program, develop a death investigation
37 program for medicolegal investigators and law enforcement,
38 enhance education and training for medical students and medical
39 residents related to forensic medical examination, establish new
40 graduate and undergraduate courses in forensic medical
41 examination, and invest in and expand graduate and undergraduate
42 courses in the forensic sciences in New Jersey institutions of higher
43 education.

44 The feasibility study is to additionally include recommendations
45 for legislation, administrative action, or other governmental action
46 that may be needed to implement any recommendations included in

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1 the report of the feasibility study. The Office will be required to
2 transmit a copy of the report of the feasibility study to the Governor
3 and to the Legislature.

4 The bill appropriates the sum of \$40,000 to the Office from the
5 General Fund for the purposes of contracting with an appropriate
6 entity to conduct the feasibility study required under the bill.