

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5040

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 11, 2026

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman KATIE BRENNAN

District 32 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman MAUREEN ROWAN

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblywoman TENNILLE R. MCCOY

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

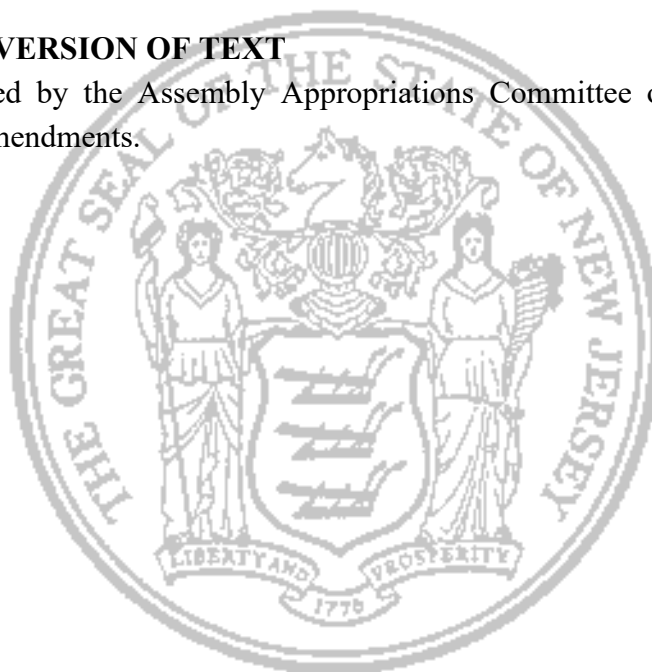
Assemblywoman Donlon

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Hope Card Program to provide victims of domestic violence with restraining order quick reference wallet card; makes appropriation.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on October 22, 2026, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 9/24/2026)

1 AN ACT concerning domestic violence central registry information,
 2 ²**[and]**² amending and supplementing P.L.1999, c.421 ², and
 3 making an appropriation².
 4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
 6 *of New Jersey:*
 7

8 1. Section 1 of P.L.1999, c.421 (C.2C:25-34) is amended to read
 9 as follows:

10 1. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall establish and
 11 maintain a central registry of all persons who have had domestic
 12 violence restraining orders entered against them, all persons who
 13 have been charged with a crime or offense involving domestic
 14 violence, and all persons who have been charged with a violation of
 15 a court order involving domestic violence. All records made
 16 pursuant to this section shall be kept confidential and shall be
 17 released only to:

18 a. A public agency authorized to investigate a report of
 19 domestic violence;

20 b. A police or other law enforcement agency investigating a
 21 report of domestic violence, or conducting a background
 22 investigation involving a person's application for a firearm permit
 23 or employment as a police or law enforcement officer or for any
 24 other purpose authorized by law or the Supreme Court of the State
 25 of New Jersey;

26 c. A court, for the purpose of issuing a Hope Card pursuant to
 27 the Hope Card Program established by section 2 of P.L. , c.
 28 (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), or upon its
 29 finding that access to such records may be necessary for
 30 determination of an issue before the court;

31 d. A surrogate, in that person's official capacity as deputy clerk
 32 of the Superior Court, in order to prepare documents that may be
 33 necessary for a court to determine an issue in an adoption
 34 proceeding; **[or]**

35 e. The Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the
 36 Department of Children and Families when the division is
 37 conducting a background investigation involving:

38 (1) an allegation of child abuse or neglect, to include any adult
 39 member of the same household as the individual who is the subject
 40 of the abuse or neglect allegation; or

41 (2) an out-of-home placement for a child being placed by the
 42 Division of Child Protection and Permanency, to include any adult
 43 member of the prospective placement household; or

44 f. A person protected by a domestic violence restraining order,
 45 pursuant to the Hope Card Program established by section 2 of

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
 not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly ACW committee amendments adopted September 10, 2026.

²Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted October 22, 2026.

1 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

2 **【Any】** Except as provided by subsection d. of section 2 of
3 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),
4 any individual, agency, surrogate, or court which receives from the
5 Administrative Office of the Courts the records referred to in this
6 section shall keep the records and reports, or parts thereof,
7 confidential and shall not disseminate or disclose such records and
8 reports, or parts thereof; provided that nothing in this section shall
9 prohibit a receiving individual, agency, surrogate or court from
10 disclosing records and reports, or parts thereof, in a manner
11 consistent with and in furtherance of the purpose for which the
12 records and reports or parts thereof were received.

13 **【Any】** Except as provided by subsection d. of section 2 of
14 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),
15 any individual who disseminates or discloses a record or report, or
16 parts thereof, of the central registry, for a purpose other than
17 investigating a report of domestic violence, conducting a
18 background investigation involving a person's application for a
19 firearm permit or employment as a police or law enforcement
20 officer, making a determination of an issue before the court,
21 conducting a background investigation as specified in subsection e.
22 of this section, or for any other purpose other than that which is
23 authorized by law or the Supreme Court of the State of New Jersey,
24 shall be guilty of a crime of the fourth degree.
25 (cf: P.L.2012, c.16, s.9)

26
27 2. (New section) a. (1) The Administrative Office of the Courts
28 shall develop and implement the Hope Card Program in all Superior
29 Courts of this State. The program shall provide for the issuance of
30 a Hope Card at no cost to any person protected by a final domestic
31 violence restraining order.

32 ¹(a)¹ The Hope Card shall be issued, upon request, as soon as
33 practicable following entry of a final restraining order, ¹**【**which
34 shall not exceed 10 business days. A parent or guardian with
35 custody of a minor child protected by a final restraining order shall
36 be entitled to receive a Hope Card for each protected child.**】** but no
37 later than 10 business days after the request is received.

38 (b) A Hope Card may identify all protected persons covered by
39 the order. A parent or guardian with custody of a protected child or
40 children may request a Hope Card identifying all protected persons.

41 (c)¹ The Administrative Office of the Courts shall develop and
42 maintain methods to request a Hope Card through its website and
43 through printed forms available in all Superior Courts.

44 ¹(d) The Administrative Office of the Courts may satisfy the
45 requirements of this section through an electronic application or
46 other digital format through which a protected party may access
47 information authorized by this section.¹

(2) The Hope Card shall not replace or supersede a final domestic violence restraining order, and any person investigating a report of domestic violence committed against a person who has been issued a Hope Card pursuant to this section shall be required to verify the information contained on the Hope Card with the domestic violence central registry pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1999, c.421 (C.2C:25-34). ¹~~【A Hope Card shall remain the property of the State.】~~¹

(3) A Hope Card issued pursuant to the program shall ¹~~【be】~~ consist of either:

(a)¹ a laminated, durable, plastic, wallet-sized card ¹~~【containing】~~ ; or

(b) a secure electronic record accessible through a mobile device, website, application, or other technology as approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

A Hope Card issued pursuant to this subsection shall contain¹, to the extent possible, essential information about the final restraining order, such as the court of issuance, date of issuance, and case number; the identifying information and characteristics of the defendant; the terms of the restraining order, including any firearms restrictions; and the names of all persons protected by the restraining order. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall consult with the ¹~~【Attorney General, the Advisory Council on Domestic Violence, the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police,】~~ State Domestic Violence Working Group¹ and other knowledgeable persons or organizations as directed by the Administrative Director of the Courts, concerning the design of the Hope Card, which may be modified from time to time.

b. In addition to any other violation of law which may be charged, theft, defacement, alteration, or falsification of a Hope Card by the defendant subject to the restraining order shall be ¹~~【a】~~¹ contempt of court in the fourth degree pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection b. of section 34 of P.L.1981, c.290 (C.2C:29-9).

c. Upon the modification of the terms of a final restraining order, a person who has been issued a Hope Card may request ¹~~【and】~~¹ an updated Hope Card ¹~~【or electronic record】~~¹ pursuant to subsection a. of this section ¹~~【in accordance with procedures established by the Administrative Office of the Courts】~~¹. Upon the dissolution of a final restraining order, a Hope Card issued pursuant to the restraining order shall ¹~~【be returned to the issuing court within 10 business days】~~ no longer be valid and may no longer be relied upon as evidence of an active restraining order¹.

d. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of P.L.1999, c.421 (C.2C:25-34) concerning the receipt, use, dissemination, and disclosure of domestic violence central registry information, a person who has been issued a Hope Card may disclose, and a person who is presented with a Hope Card may use, the information

1 contained on the card for any lawful purpose in furtherance of
2 receiving or providing services for victims of domestic violence or
3 for the enforcement of the restraining order. However, any person
4 who receives information contained on a Hope Card shall take all
5 reasonable measures to preserve confidentiality.

6 e. In addition to, and as part of, the domestic violence training
7 required pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1991, c.261 (C.2C:25-20)¹ [.] :

8 (1)¹ the Attorney General ¹[and the Administrative Director of
9 the Courts]¹ shall ensure that all law enforcement officers ¹[.] and¹
10 prosecutors ¹[.] required to receive domestic violence training
11 receive appropriate training concerning the administration of the
12 Hope Card Program; and

13 (2) the Administrative Director of the Courts shall ensure that
14 all¹ judges¹[.]¹ and court personnel required to receive domestic
15 violence training also receive appropriate training on the
16 implementation of the Program. ¹[The Supreme Court of New
17 Jersey may adopt any Rules of Court necessary to implement and
18 operate the Program.]¹

19 f. ²[There is appropriated annually from the General Fund] The
20 State shall appropriate annually² to the Judiciary such funds as shall
21 be necessary for the implementation of ²[this section, as certified
22 by the Administrative Director of the Courts, and subject to the
23 approval of the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting
24 in the Department of the Treasury] section 2 of P.L. , c.
25 (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)².

26
27 ²3. (New section) There is appropriated from the General Fund
28 to the Judiciary such funds as shall be necessary for the
29 implementation of section 2 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
30 before the Legislature as this bill), as certified by the
31 Administrative Director of the Courts, and subject to the approval
32 of the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting in the
33 Department of the Treasury.²

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35
36
37 ¹[3.] 4.¹ This act shall take effect on the first day of the 13th
38 month next following enactment, except that the Attorney General
39 and the Administrative Director of the Courts may take such
40 anticipatory action as may be necessary for the timely
41 implementation of this act.