ASSEMBLY, No. 5398

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT
District 29 (Essex and Hudson)

SYNOPSIS

Requires AOC to provide law enforcement agencies immediate access to domestic violence central registry.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ACT concerning domestic violence central registry records and amending and supplementing P.L.1999, c.421.

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

1. Section 1 of P.L.1999, c.421 (C.2C:25-35) is amended to read as follows:

1. a. The Administrative Office of the Courts shall establish and maintain a central registry of all persons who have had domestic violence restraining orders entered against them, all persons who have been charged with a crime or offense involving domestic violence, and all persons who have been charged with a violation of a court order involving domestic violence.

b. A police or other law enforcement agency shall be provided with immediate electronic access to the registry for the purpose of determining whether a person who is the subject of an investigation or arrest is included in the registry, investigating a report of domestic violence, conducting a background investigation involving a person's application for a firearm permit or employment as a police or law enforcement officer, or for any other purpose authorized by law or the Supreme Court of the State of New Jersey.

c. All records made pursuant to this section shall be kept confidential and, in addition to a police or other law enforcement agency, shall be released only to:

[a.**]** (1) A public agency authorized to investigate a report of domestic violence;

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

c.**]** (2) A court, upon its finding that access to such records may be necessary for determination of an issue before the court;

[d.**]** (3) A surrogate, in that person's official capacity as deputy clerk of the Superior Court, in order to prepare documents that may be necessary for a court to determine an issue in an adoption proceeding; or

[e.**]** (4) The Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families when the division is conducting a background investigation involving:

[(1)**]** (a) an allegation of child abuse or neglect, to include any adult member of the same household as the individual who is the subject of the abuse or neglect allegation; or

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.

⟦(2)⟧ (b) an out-of-home placement for a child being placed by the Division of Child Protection and Permanency, to include any adult member of the prospective placement household.

d. Any individual, agency, surrogate, or court which receives from the Administrative Office of the Courts the records referred to in this section shall keep the records and reports, or parts thereof, confidential and shall not disseminate or disclose such records and reports, or parts thereof; provided that nothing in this section shall prohibit a receiving individual, agency, surrogate or court from disclosing records and reports, or parts thereof, in a manner consistent with and in furtherance of the purpose for which the records and reports or parts thereof were received.

e. Any individual who disseminates or discloses a record or report, or parts thereof, of the central registry, for a purpose other than investigating a report of domestic violence, conducting a background investigation involving a person's application for a firearm permit or employment as a police or law enforcement officer, making a determination of an issue before the court, conducting a background investigation as specified in paragraph (4) of subsection ⟦e.⟧ c. of this section, or for any other purpose other than that which is authorized by law or the Supreme Court of the State of New Jersey, shall be guilty of a crime of the fourth degree.
(cf: P.L.2012, c.16, s.9)

2. (New section) a. When conducting an investigation or arrest of a person, a law enforcement officer shall conduct a search of the central registry established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1999, c.421 (C.2C:25-34) to determine whether the person is the subject of a temporary or final domestic violence restraining order entered against the person.

b. The Attorney General, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), may promulgate rules and regulations necessary to effectuate the purposes of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the third month next following the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to provide law enforcement agencies with immediate electronic access to the domestic violence central registry.

Under current law, the AOC is required to maintain a central registry of all persons who have had domestic violence restraining orders entered against them, all persons who have been charged

with a crime or offense involving domestic violence, and all persons who have been charged with a violation of a court order involving domestic violence. All records maintained pursuant to the registry are to be kept confidential and are only to be released to the following:

- A public agency authorized to investigate a report of domestic violence;
- A police or other law enforcement agency investigating a report of domestic violence or conducting certain background investigations;
- A court, upon finding that access to the records may be necessary for determining an issue before the court;
- A surrogate, in the surrogate's official capacity as deputy clerk of the superior court, in order to prepare documents that may be necessary for a court to determine an issue in an adoption proceeding; or
- The Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families when the division is conducting certain background investigations.

A person who is authorized to receive the records, but discloses or disseminates them for a purpose other than the purpose for which the records were received is guilty of a crime of the fourth degree. A crime of the fourth degree is punishable by imprisonment of up to 18 months, a fine of up to $10,000, or both.

Under the bill, a police or other law enforcement agency is to be provided immediate electronic access to the registry for the purpose of determining whether a person who is the subject of an investigation or arrest is included in the registry, when investigating a report of domestic violence, or conducting certain background investigations. The bill further authorizes the Attorney General to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to effectuate the purposes of the bill.