ASSEMBLY, No. 5544

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

Sponsored by:
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District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)
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District 8 (Atlantic and Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes additional penalties for crimes and offenses committed in or near designated transit facilities.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/15/2026)

AN ACT concerning additional penalties for certain offenses committed on or near designated transit facilities and amending and supplementing Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. (New section) As used in this act:

"Designated transit facility" means a passenger rail station, train station, bus terminal, bus rapid transit station, light rail station, ferry terminal, or other major transportation facility designated pursuant to section 3 of this act.

"Transit-related activity" means activity occurring on, at, or in connection with the operation, use, or provision of public transportation services, including activity involving a transit passenger, transit employee, transit vehicle, transit property, transit equipment, or transit service.

"Transit safety zone" means the area located on or within 500 feet of the boundary of a designated transit facility.

2. (New section) a. In addition to any penalty provided by law, a person who commits a crime enumerated in subsection b. of this section if committed in a transit safety zone shall be subject to the following:

(1) a person convicted of a qualifying offense that constitutes a crime of the first or second degree shall be subject to an additional fine of not less than $5,000 and not more than $25,000.

(2) a person convicted of a qualifying offense that constitutes a crime of the third degree shall be subject to an additional fine of not less than $2,500 and not more than $10,000.

(3) a person convicted of a qualifying offense that constitutes a crime of the fourth degree shall be subject to an additional fine of not less than $1,000 and not more than $5,000.

(4) person convicted of a qualifying offense that constitutes a disorderly persons offense or petty disorderly persons offense shall be subject to an additional fine of not less than $500 and not more than $1,000.

b. The additional penalty pursuant to this section shall be imposed on a person who commits one of the following crimes or offenses within a transit safety zone and in connection with a designated transit facility or transit-related activity:

(1) assault or aggravated assault in violation of N.J.S.2C:12-1;

(2) terroristic threats in violation of N.J.S.2C:12-3;

(3) lewdness in violation of N.J.S.2C:14-4;

(4) robbery in violation of N.J.S.2C:15-1;

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.

(5) criminal mischief in violation of N.J.S.2C:17-3;

(6) burglary in violation of N.J.S.2C:18-2;

(7) criminal trespass in violation of N.J.S.2C:18-3;

(8) theft as set forth in chapter 20 of Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes;

(9) shoplifting in violation of N.J.S.2C:20-11;

(10) obstruction of the administration of law or other governmental function in violation of N.J.S.2C:29-1;

(11) resisting arrest or eluding in violation of N.J.S.2C:29-2;

(12) disorderly conduct in violation of N.J.S.2C:33-2;

(13) harassment in violation of N.J.S.2C:33-4;

(14) manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing, or possessing or having under control with intent to manufacture, distribute, or dispense, a controlled dangerous substance or controlled substance analog in violation of N.J.S.2C:35-5;

(15) unlawful possession or use of a controlled dangerous substance or controlled substance analog in violation of N.J.S.2C:35-10;

(16) possession or use of drug paraphernalia in violation of N.J.S.2C:36-2, when applicable;

(17) possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose in violation of N.J.S.2C:39-4;

(18) unlawful possession of a weapon in violation of N.J.S.2C:39-5;

(19) possession of a weapon while committing a controlled dangerous substance offense in violation of section 1 of P.L.1998, c.26 (C.2C:39-4.1);

(20) possession of a weapon by a person prohibited from possessing a weapon in violation of section 6 of P.L.1979, c.179 (C.2C:39-7); and

(21) any other crime or offense designated by the Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to rules and regulations adopted pursuant to section 5 of this act, when the Attorney General determines that the offense presents a substantial threat to the safety of persons using or working at a designated transit facility.

c. The additional penalty imposed pursuant to this section shall be in addition to, and shall not replace, any fine, term of imprisonment, period of probation, community service, assessment, or other penalty authorized or imposed pursuant to the underlying offense.

d. The court may waive or reduce the additional fine imposed pursuant to this section upon a finding on the record that imposition of the minimum additional fine would result in a substantial injustice.

3. (New section) a. The Department of Transportation shall designate as “designated transit facilities” for the purposes of this act the transit facilities identified below by their names as of the

effective date of this act, notwithstanding any subsequent change in the name of a transit facility:

(1) Newark Penn Station;

(2) Hoboken Terminal;

(3) Secaucus Junction;

(4) Trenton Transit Center;

(5) Metropark Station;

(6) Newark Broad Street Station;

(7) Elizabeth Station;

(8) New Brunswick Station;

(9) Princeton Junction Station;

(10) Hamilton Station;

(11) Jersey Avenue Station;

(12) Rahway Station;

(13) Edison Station;

(14) Somerville Station;

(15) Morristown Station;

(16) Dover Station;

(17) Atlantic City Rail Terminal;

(18) Journal Square Transportation Center;

(19) Exchange Place Station;

(20) Grove Street Station;

(21) Hoboken PATH Station; and

(22) any other transit facility designated pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

b. The Commissioner of Transportation, in consultation with the Executive Director of NJ Transit and the Attorney General, may designate additional transit facilities as designated transit facilities for the purposes of this act based upon passenger volume, number of transit lines or services, transfer activity, geographic location, documented public safety concerns, or other factors relevant to the safety and security of transit passengers and employees.

c. The commissioner shall publish and maintain on the Department of Transportation's Internet website an official list of designated transit facilities and an official map identifying the boundaries of each facility and its corresponding 500-foot transit safety zone.

d. The commissioner shall periodically review the list of designated transit facilities and may add or remove a facility based upon the criteria established pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

4. Section 7 of P.L.2022, c.131 (C.2C:58-4.6) is amended to read as follows:

7. Places where the carrying of a firearm or destructive device is prohibited.

a. Except as otherwise provided in this section and in the case of a brief, incidental entry onto property, which shall be deemed a de

minimis infraction within the contemplation of N.J.S.2C:2-11, it shall be a crime of the third degree for any person, other than a person lawfully carrying a firearm within the authorized scope of an exemption set forth in N.J.S.2C:39-6, to knowingly carry a firearm as defined in subsection f. of N.J.S.2C:39-1 and a crime of the second degree to knowingly possess a destructive device as defined in subsection c. of N.J.S.2C:39-1 in any of the following places, including in or upon any part of the buildings, grounds, or parking area of:

(1) a place owned, leased, or under the control of State, county or municipal government used for the purpose of government administration, including but not limited to police stations;

(2) a courthouse, courtroom, or any other premises used to conduct judicial or court administrative proceedings or functions;

(3) a State, county, or municipal correctional or juvenile justice facility, jail and any other place maintained by or for a governmental entity for the detention of criminal suspects or offenders;

(4) a State-contracted half-way house;

(5) a location being used as a polling place during the conduct of an election and places used for the storage or tabulation of ballots;

(6) within 100 feet of a place where a public gathering, demonstration or event is held for which a government permit is required, during the conduct of such gathering, demonstration or event;

(7) a school, college, university or other educational institution, and on any school bus;

(8) a child care facility, including a day care center;

(9) a nursery school, pre-school, zoo, or summer camp;

(10) a park, beach, recreation facility or area or playground owned or controlled by a State, county or local government unit, or any part of such a place, which is designated as a gun-free zone by the governing authority based on considerations of public safety;

(11) youth sports events, as defined in N.J.S.5:17-1, during and immediately preceding and following the conduct of the event, except that this provision shall not apply to participants of a youth sports event which is a firearm shooting competition to which paragraph (3) of subsection b. of section 14 of P.L.1979, c.179 (C.2C:58-6.1) applies;

(12) a publicly owned or leased library or museum;

(13) a shelter for the homeless, emergency shelter for the homeless, basic center shelter program, shelter for homeless or runaway youth, children's shelter, child care shelter, shelter for victims of domestic violence, or any shelter licensed by or under the control of the Juvenile Justice Commission or the Department of Children and Families;

(14) a community residence for persons with developmental disabilities, head injuries, or terminal illnesses, or any other

residential setting licensed by the Department of Human Services or Department of Health;

(15) a bar or restaurant where alcohol is served, and any other site or facility where alcohol is sold for consumption on the premises;

(16) a Class 5 Cannabis retailer or medical cannabis dispensary, including any consumption areas licensed or permitted by the Cannabis Regulatory Commission established pursuant to section 31 of P.L.2019, c.153 (C.24:6I-24);

(17) a privately or publicly owned and operated entertainment facility within this State, including but not limited to a theater, stadium, museum, arena, racetrack or other place where performances, concerts, exhibits, games or contests are held;

(18) a casino and related facilities, including but not limited to appurtenant hotels, retail premises, restaurant and bar facilities, and entertainment and recreational venues located within the casino property;

(19) a plant or operation that produces, converts, distributes or stores energy or converts one form of energy to another;

(20) an airport, designated transit facility as defined in section 1 of P.L. , or public transportation hub;

(21) a health care facility, including but not limited to a general hospital, special hospital, psychiatric hospital, public health center, diagnostic center, treatment center, rehabilitation center, extended care facility, skilled nursing home, nursing home, intermediate care facility, tuberculosis hospital, chronic disease hospital, maternity hospital, outpatient clinic, dispensary, assisted living center, home health care agency, residential treatment facility, residential health care facility, medical office, or ambulatory care facility;

(22) a facility licensed or regulated by the Department of Human Services, Department of Children and Families, or Department of Health, other than a health care facility, that provides addiction or mental health treatment or support services;

(23) a public location being used for making motion picture or television images for theatrical, commercial or educational purposes, during the time such location is being used for that purpose;

(24) private property, including but not limited to residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, institutional or undeveloped property, unless the owner has provided express consent or has posted a sign indicating that it is permissible to carry on the premises a concealed handgun with a valid and lawfully issued permit under N.J.S.2C:58-4, provided that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to affect the authority to keep or carry a firearm established under subsection e. of N.J.S.2C:39-6; and

(25) any other place in which the carrying of a firearm is prohibited by statute or rule or regulation promulgated by a federal or State agency.

b. (1) A person, other than a person lawfully carrying a firearm within the authorized scope of an exemption set forth in subsection a., c., or l. of N.J.S.2C:39-6, who is otherwise authorized under the law to carry or transport a firearm shall not do so while in a vehicle in New Jersey, unless the handgun is unloaded and contained in a closed and securely fastened case, gunbox, or locked unloaded in the trunk of the vehicle.

(2) A holder of a valid and lawfully issued permit to carry a handgun shall not leave a handgun outside of their immediate possession or control within a parked vehicle, unless the handgun is unloaded and contained in a closed and securely fastened case, or gunbox, and is not visible from outside of the vehicle, or is locked unloaded in the trunk or storage area of the vehicle.

A violation of paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection is a crime of the fourth degree.

c. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections a. and b. of this section, the holder of a valid and lawfully issued permit to carry under N.J.S.2C:58-4 who is otherwise prohibited under this section from carrying a concealed firearm into the parking area of a prohibited location specified in subsection a. of this section shall be permitted to:

(1) transport a concealed handgun or ammunition within a vehicle into or out of the parking area, provided that the handgun is unloaded and contained in a closed and securely fastened case, gunbox, or locked unloaded in the trunk or storage area of the vehicle;

(2) store a handgun or ammunition within a locked lock box and out of plain view within the vehicle in the parking area;

(3) transport a concealed handgun in the immediate area surrounding their vehicle within a prohibited parking lot area only for the limited purpose of storing or retrieving the handgun within a locked lock box in the vehicle's trunk or other place inside the vehicle that is out of plain view; and

(4) transport a concealed handgun between a vehicle parked within a prohibited parking lot area and a place other than a prohibited place enumerated in subsection a. of this section, provided that the person immediately leaves the parking lot area and does not enter into or on the grounds of the prohibited place with the handgun.

d. The holder of a valid and lawfully issued permit to carry under N.J.S.2C:58-4 shall not be in violation of subsection a. of this section while the holder is traveling along a public right-of-way that touches or crosses any of the places enumerated in subsection a. of this section if the concealed handgun is carried on their person in accordance with the provisions of this act or is being transported in a vehicle by the permit holder in accordance with all other applicable provisions of law.

e. (1) Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit the holder of a valid and lawfully issued permit under N.J.S.2C:58-4 who is lawfully authorized to provide security at a place enumerated in subsection a. of this section from carrying a firearm, openly or concealed, provided that the authorization is set forth in writing, and only to the extent permitted by the entity responsible for security at the place in question.

(2) Unless otherwise required or prohibited by law, the owner or entity in control of any place enumerated in subsection a. of this section or owner or entity responsible for providing security may allow or prohibit retired law enforcement officers who are authorized to possess and carry a handgun pursuant to subsection l. of N.J.S.2C:39-6 or qualified retired law enforcement officers within the meaning of the federal "Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004," Pub.L. 108-277 to carry a concealed handgun on the premises of such place.

f. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit an employee of an armored car company who is the holder of a valid and lawfully issued permit to carry a handgun issued pursuant to N.J.S.2C:58-4 who is contractually authorized to provide services for a client at a place enumerated in subsection a. of this section from carrying a firearm, openly, in the regular course of employment.

g. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the carrying or transporting of a firearm in accordance with subsections e. and f. of N.J.S.2C:39-6 or where it is otherwise expressly authorized by law.

(cf: P.L.2022, c.131, s.7)

5. The Commissioner of Transportation, in accordance with the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), may adopt rules and issue directives as necessary to implement the provisions of this act and may take any anticipatory administrative action necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act.

6. This act shall take effect on the seventh month next following the date of enactment.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes Transit Safety Zones around designated major transit facilities in New Jersey and establishes additional penalties for certain criminal offenses committed within those zones and in connection with a designated transit facility or transit-related activity. The bill defines a Transit Safety Zone as the area located on or within 500 feet of a designated transit facility.

The bill designates major transportation facilities, including Newark Penn Station, Hoboken Terminal, Secaucus Junction, Trenton Transit Center, Metropark Station, Newark Broad Street Station, Elizabeth Station, New Brunswick Station, Princeton Junction Station, Hamilton Station, Atlantic City Rail Terminal, Journal Square Transportation Center, Exchange Place Station, and other specified transit facilities as designated transit facilities. The Commissioner of Transportation may designate additional transit facilities based on factors including passenger volume, transit services, transfer activity, geographic location, and documented public safety concerns.

Under the bill, certain drug, weapons, assault, robbery, burglary, theft, shoplifting, criminal mischief, terroristic threats, disorderly conduct, lewdness, harassment, trespass, obstruction, and resisting arrest or eluding offenses committed within a Transit Safety Zone constitute qualifying offenses.

A person convicted of an enumerated offense within a Transit Safety Zone would be subject to an additional penalty in addition to the penalties imposed under current law. The additional fine would range from $500 to $25,000, depending on the degree of the offense. The bill permits a court to waive or reduce the additional fine upon finding that imposing the minimum fine would result in a substantial injustice.

The bill directs the Commissioner of Transportation to maintain an official list and map of designated transit facilities and their corresponding 500-foot Transit Safety Zones and authorizes the commissioner to adopt rules and directives necessary to implement the bill.

This bill also amends current law concerning places where the possession of a firearm or destructive device is prohibited to include designated transit facilities, in addition to airports and transportation hubs currently covered under the law.