

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5598

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 22, 2026

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 5598.

As amended, this bill expands the duties of the Campus Sexual Assault Commission and requires the Secretary of Higher Education and institutions of higher education to designate certain safety-related liaisons.

Under the bill, the Campus Sexual Assault Commission will be tasked with, in addition to the commission's tasks under current law:

- facilitating communication between institutions of higher education and community-based organizations;
- providing technical assistance to institutions of higher education using webinars; and
- curating a comprehensive website repository of best practices, templates, and resources for use by institutions of higher education for the prevention of and response to campus sexual assault and interpersonal violence. The repository is required to be updated with new information and resources as they become available to ensure institutions have access to the most current and effective strategies.

The bill requires the Secretary of Higher Education to designate a Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments Coordinator within the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to centralize oversight and facilitate the delivery of technical assistance, data collection, and policy guidance concerning the prevention of and response to campus sexual assault. The coordinator will serve as the primary liaison to institutions of higher education and community-based organizations concerning the prevention of and response to campus sexual assault.

The bill also requires each institution of higher education to designate a campus safety liaison to facilitate cross-departmental collaboration within the institution of higher education concerning the prevention of and response to campus sexual assault. The campus safety liaison will coordinate a comprehensive campus approach to safety to link prevention, data collection, and response functions. The campus safety liaison, who may be an existing employee of the institution, is required to have demonstrated expertise in compliance and reporting under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

and sexual violence prevention on college campuses, or receiving training to develop that expertise in the case of an existing employee.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to permit an institution of higher education to designate an existing employee to serve as the campus safety liaison, provided that the employee has demonstrated expertise in compliance and reporting under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and sexual violence prevention on college campuses, or receives training to develop that expertise.