

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 4101
(First Reprint)

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 4101 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

Assembly Bill No. 4101 (First Reprint) amends P.L.2017, c.328, also known as "Sara's Law," in an effort to increase awareness and utilization of the "Next of Kin Registry" ("the Registry") maintained by the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission ("MVC"). The Registry, which is designated for the exclusive use of law enforcement and designated MVC employees and accessible by State law enforcement officials, stores emergency contact information and the vehicle information numbers of permit, driver's license, and non-driver identification holders. The bill would enhance the Registry by enabling New Jersey drivers and non-driver identification holders to submit information to the Registry through an in-person application at MVC agency locations; currently, they may only submit the information through MVC's website or by mail. The bill also requires MVC to automatically prompt those applying for or renewing a permit, driver's license, or non-driver identification card in-person or online to enter information into the Registry. In addition, the bill requires law enforcement officials, including local law enforcement, to be granted "direct access to the information in the registry." Finally, the bill directs MVC to coordinate with other Executive Branch departments and agencies to raise public awareness about the Registry and awareness among law enforcement on how to properly use the registry.

I applaud the bill's sponsors for their commitment to expanding opportunities to submit information to the Registry and for expanding law enforcement's direct access to the Registry. The Registry is a valuable tool that enables first responders to quickly contact an injured or incapacitated person's loved ones following an accident.

I thus wholeheartedly support the bill's goals of facilitating in-person applications to the Registry at MVC agency locations and increasing awareness of the Registry among the public and law enforcement officials.

I have concerns, however, with some of the mechanisms mandated by the bill. First, although it is sensible for MVC to automatically prompt a person who has engaged in an online transaction to submit information to the Registry, I am concerned that requiring an automatic prompt during appointments at MVC agency locations would add another step to in-person transactions and result in undue delays. Accordingly, I am suggesting an amendment that would replace the requirement for MVC to automatically prompt individuals to submit information to the Registry during in-person transactions with a requirement that MVC automatically prompt those who have used MVC's website to schedule certain in-person appointments to submit information to the Registry.

Second, I am concerned about expanding access to the Registry without appropriate safeguards in place, given the personal information contained in the Registry. I am thus suggesting minor amendments to make clear that the Chief Administrator of MVC, in consultation with the Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police ("NJSP"), may develop reasonable restrictions and conditions on access to the Registry by law enforcement. Finally, although MVC is the appropriate entity to lead any public awareness efforts with respect to the Registry, the Department of Law and Public Safety is best suited to educate law enforcement officers. My suggested amendments accordingly make the Attorney General, in consultation with the Superintendent of NJSP, responsible for raising awareness of the Registry among law enforcement agencies and officers.

I once again applaud the bill's sponsors for their commitment to the Registry and thank them for their collaboration and collegiality with respect to this bill. My suggested amendments will

ensure that the sponsors' principal goals are achieved, while also addressing my concerns related to efficiency, security, and the division of responsibilities within the Executive Branch.

Therefore, I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 4101 (First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

<u>Page 3, Section 1, Line 24:</u>	Delete "applying" and insert "who has used the commission's internet website to schedule an appointment to apply"
<u>Page 3, Section 1, Line 26:</u>	After "card, or" insert "who is"
<u>Page 3, Section 1, Lines 27-28:</u>	Delete "in person at a commission agency location or"
<u>Page 3, Section 1, Line 35:</u>	Delete "Law" and insert "The commission shall afford law"
<u>Page 3, Section 1, Line 35:</u>	Delete "officials shall have" and insert "officers with"
<u>Page 3, Section 1, Line 36:</u>	After "registry" insert ", provided that the chief administrator, in consultation with the Superintendent of State Police, may impose reasonable restrictions and conditions on such access"
<u>Page 4, Section 1, Line 20:</u>	After "e." insert "(1)"
<u>Page 4, Section 1, Line 20:</u>	After "shall" insert "engage in a public awareness campaign and"
<u>Page 4, Section 1, Line 23:</u>	After "Registry" insert "."
<u>Page 4, Section 1, Line 23:</u>	Delete "and raising" and insert "(2) The Attorney General, in consultation with the Superintendent of State Police, shall take appropriate steps to raise"

[seal]

Respectfully,

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Parimal Garg

Chief Counsel to the Governor