

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

ACTING GOVERNOR OLIVER SIGNS LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH THE NEW JERSEY CAREGIVER TASK FORCE

12/28/2018

TRENTON – Acting Governor Sheila Oliver today signed legislation to establish the New Jersey Caregiver Task Force, which will evaluate support services that are available to caregivers. The Task Force will also recommend improvements and expansion of such services and is required to provide an initial report within a year of its organization.

“Caregivers throughout our state work long hours for often little to no compensation, supporting the elderly and those with disabilities, including mental illnesses,” **Acting Governor Sheila Oliver said**. “I am proud to sign a bill creating the New Jersey Caregiver Taskforce, which will explore ways to improve conditions and support these selfless individuals and the people they care for.”

“Caregivers are vital to the quality of life for many New Jerseyans, especially individuals with disabilities and older adults, but caregiving is also difficult work that can take its toll,” **said Commissioner Carole Johnson**, member of the New Jersey Caregiver Task Force. “Caregivers devote their lives to their loved ones, often missing work and missing out on wages, and this is going to become more of a concern in the coming years with an aging population. The Murphy Administration is committed to supporting caregivers and improving programs that can help. I look forward to working with the task force and supporting caregivers throughout our state.”

The Task Force will consist of 11 members from public and private sectors. Three public members will be appointed by the Governor, including one person who is a caregiver for a person with a disability, one person who is a caregiver for a person with mental illness, and one person who is a caregiver for an elderly person.

Prime sponsors of the bill include Senators Joseph Vitale and Linda Greenstein; Assembly members Pamela Lampitt, Gabriela Mosquera, and Valerie Vainieri Huttle.

“This legislation will allow us to study and design the kind of relief and support needed by uncompensated relatives, friends or community members who take care of the elderly, disabled or mentally ill,” **said Senator Vitale**. “We need to formulate the right kind of support for caregivers now so that when the number of adults needing assistance with daily activities doubles by 2020, we will be prepared to help.”

“Caregiving can take serious emotional and physical tolls that often leads to consequences in the caregivers’ own lives, ranging from health issues to the loss of wages and health benefits,” **said Senator Greenstein**. “Getting a better understanding of the needs of caregivers will allow us to provide assistance to them in areas of their lives where they need it the most.”

“Caregivers face an untold number of challenges in today’s society,” **said Assemblywoman Lampitt**. “Many family caregivers are fulfilling these duties out of a sense of love and devotion, which can often make them feel anxious and overwhelmed. We must make sure we are doing all we can to provide them with the resources and support they need to fill this critical role.”

“Anyone who’s ever found themselves in a caregiver role understands the toll it can take,” **said Assemblywoman Mosquera**. “Lack of sleep, privacy and the time to fulfill one’s own needs can increase the risk for depression and anxiety. I hope this task force will take to heart the real-life experiences of caregivers so we can create a greater support network statewide.”

“Studies show that the emotional and physical health of caregivers often suffers as a result of the stress and physical demands they encounter, particularly when it comes to caring for people with dementia or Alzheimer’s,” **said Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle**. “This task force will take an honest look at how we can better address these needs.”

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