

## CHAPTER 60

AN ACT establishing a “Sexual Violence Restorative Justice Pilot Program.”

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

1. a. The Attorney General shall establish a three-year “Sexual Violence Restorative Justice Pilot Program” to implement a restorative justice program for survivors of sexual violence. The Attorney General shall implement this program by entering into an agreement with an organization to design the program and provide technical assistance and an agreement with a separate organization to conduct the program. The Attorney General shall select the organizations, who are to have expertise in trauma informed care and not be associated with any law enforcement agency, through requests for proposals. Both organizations shall be compensated.

b. Through the direct participation of survivors of sexual violence, including survivors who have chosen not to report the act of sexual violence to law enforcement, the program shall implement restorative justice practices which include, but are not limited to, upholding the principles of survivor autonomy, restoring a sense of control and independence to survivors, and emphasizing outcomes that are essential to the survivor’s healing process.

A survivor of sexual assault and a person accused of sexual assault shall not be required to participate in the restorative justice program. If a survivor of sexual assault chooses to participate in the restorative justice program, the survivor may choose to no longer participate at any time.

The pilot program shall be established in one northern, one central, and one southern county in this State, as determined by the Attorney General.

c. The Attorney General, in conjunction with the organizations selected pursuant to subsection a. of this section, shall submit a report evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot program to the Governor and, pursuant to the provisions of section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature within 90 days of completion of the program. The report shall evaluate the pilot program and recommend whether the pilot program should be continued, expanded, or made permanent.

d. For the purposes of this section, “restorative justice” means an approach to repairing the harm caused by a crime through direct involvement of those affected, including the victim, the victim’s family and friends, and the community, for the purpose of fulfilling the victim’s expectations for justice while also holding accountable the person who caused the harm, and which may be implemented through varying formats, such as sharing circles, victim impact panels, and facilitated conferences.

2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon the filing of the report required pursuant to subsection c. of section 1 of P.L.2021, c.60.

Approved April 19, 2021.