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## R 1581 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Policy and Regulation 1581 - Section A.** sets forth the New Jersey Civil Service Commission's (Civil Service Commission) Uniform Domestic Violence Policy that all public employers shall adopt and distribute to all their employees in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 11A:2-6a. The purpose of the Uniform Domestic Violence Policy is to encourage public employees who are victims of domestic violence, and those impacted by domestic violence, to seek assistance from their public employer's human resources officer(s) and provide a standard for a public employer's human resources officer(s) to follow when responding to employees.

**Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section B.** provides employment protection for employees of those employers as defined in N.J.S.A. 34:11C-2, who are victims of domestic violence or sexual violence in accordance with the provisions of the New Jersey Security and Financial Empowerment Act (NJ SAFE Act) - N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1 et seq.

### **A. Uniform Domestic Violence Policy (N.J.S.A. 11A:2-6a)**

#### **1. Definitions**

The following terms are defined solely for the purposes of N.J.S.A. 11A:2-6a and Policy and Regulation 1581:

**“Domestic Violence” - Acts or threatened acts, that are used by a perpetrator to gain power and control over a current or former spouse, family member, household member, intimate partner, someone the perpetrator dated, or person with whom the perpetrator shares a child in common or anticipates having a child in common if one of the parties is pregnant. Domestic violence includes, but is not limited to the following: physical violence; injury; intimidation; sexual violence or abuse; emotional and/or psychological intimidation; verbal abuse; threats; harassment; cyber harassment; stalking; economic abuse or control; damaging property to intimidate or attempt to control the behavior of a person in a relationship with the perpetrator; strangulation; or abuse of animals or pets.**

**“Abuser/Perpetrator” - An individual who commits or threatens to commit an act of domestic violence, including unwarranted violence against individuals and animals. Other abusive behaviors and forms of violence can include the following: bullying, humiliating, isolating, intimidating, harassing, stalking, or threatening the victim, disturbing someone's peace, or destroying someone's property.**

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**“Human Resources Officer (HRO)”** - An employee of a public employer with a human resources job title, or its equivalent, who is responsible for orienting, training, counseling, and appraising staff. Persons designated by the employer as the primary or secondary contact to assist employees in reporting domestic violence incidents.

**“Intimate Partner”** - Partners of any sexual orientation or preference who have been legally married or formerly married to one another, have a child or children in common, or anticipate having a child in common if one party is pregnant. Intimate partner also includes those who live together or have lived together, as well as persons who are dating or have dated in the past.

**“Temporary Restraining Order (TRO)”** - A civil court order issued by a judge to protect the life, health, or well-being of a victim. TROs can prohibit domestic violence offenders from having contact with victims, either in person or through any means of communication, including third parties. TROs also can prohibit offenders from a victim’s home and workplace. A violation of a TRO may be a criminal offense. A TRO will last approximately ten business days, or until a court holds a hearing to determine if a Final Restraining Order (FRO) is needed. In New Jersey, there is no expiration of a FRO.

**“Victim”** - A person who is eighteen years of age or older or who is an emancipated minor and who has been subjected to domestic violence by a spouse, former spouse, or any other person who is a present household member or was at any time a household member. A victim of domestic violence is also any person, regardless of age, who has been subjected to domestic violence by one of the following factors: a person with whom the victim has a child in common; a person with whom the victim anticipates having a child in common, if one of the parties is pregnant; and a person with whom the victim has had a dating relationship.

**“Workplace-Related Incidents”** - Incidents of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking, including acts, attempted acts, or threatened acts by or against employees, the families of employees, and/or their property, that imperil the safety, well-being, or productivity of any person associated with a public employee in the State of New Jersey, regardless of whether the act occurred in or outside the organization’s physical workplace. An employee is considered to be in the workplace while in or using the resources of the employer. This includes, but is not limited to: facilities; work sites; equipment; vehicles; or while on work-related travel.

## 2. Persons Covered Under N.J.S.A. 11A:2-6a and Policy and Regulation 1581

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All New Jersey public employees are covered under N.J.S.A. 11A:2-6a and Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section A. A State of New Jersey public employer is any State, county, municipality, school district, or other political subdivision thereof, and any agency, authority, or instrumentality of the foregoing. Casual/seasonal employees, interns, volunteers, and temporary employees of any public employer at any workplace location are also covered under N.J.S.A. 11A:2-6a and Regulation 1581 – Section A.

3. **Responsibility of Employer to Designate a Human Resources Officer (HRO)**
  - a. All public employers shall designate an HRO to assist employees who are victims of domestic violence.
  - b. The designated HRO must receive training on responding to and assisting employees who are domestic violence victims in accordance with Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section A. Should the HRO be unavailable at any time, the employer must designate a secondary HRO, who must also be appropriately trained to respond and assist domestic violence victims pursuant to Policy and Regulation 1581.
  - c. Managers and supervisors are often aware of circumstances involving an employee who is experiencing domestic violence. Managers and supervisors are required to refer any employee who is experiencing domestic violence or who report witnessing domestic violence to the designated HRO. Managers and supervisors must maintain confidentiality, to the extent possible, and be sensitive, compassionate, and respectful to the needs of persons who are victims of domestic violence.
    - (1) The name and contact information of the designated HRO must be provided to all employees.
  - d. Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section A. does not supersede applicable laws, guidelines, standard operating procedures, internal affairs policies, or New Jersey Attorney General directives and guidelines that impose a duty to report.
    - (1) For example, if there is any indication a child may also be a victim, reporting is mandatory to the Department of Children and Families, Child Protection and Permanency, under N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.13.

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## 4. Domestic Violence Reporting Procedure

- a. Employees who are victims of domestic violence are encouraged to seek immediate assistance from their HRO.
- b. Employees who have information about or witness an act of domestic violence against an employee are encouraged to report that information to the designated HRO, unless the employee is required to report the domestic violence pursuant to applicable laws, guidelines, standard operating procedures, internal affairs policies, or New Jersey Attorney General directives and guidelines that impose a duty to report, in which case the employee must report to the appropriate authority in addition to reporting to the designated HRO.
- c. Nothing in Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section A. shall preclude an employee from contacting 911 in emergency situations. HROs shall remind employees to contact 911 if they feel they are in immediate danger.
- d. Each designated HRO shall:
  - (1) Immediately respond to an employee upon request and provide a safe and confidential location to allow the employee to discuss the circumstances surrounding the domestic violence incident and the request for assistance.
  - (2) Determine whether there is an imminent and emergent need to contact 911 and/or local law enforcement.
  - (3) Provide the employee with resource information and a confidential telephone line to make necessary calls for services for emergent intervention and supportive services, when appropriate. The HRO or the employee can contact the appropriate Employee Assistance Program to assist with securing resources and confidential services.
  - (4) Refer the employee to the provisions and protections of the New Jersey Security and Financial Empowerment Act, N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1 et seq. (NJ SAFE Act), referenced in Regulation 1581 - Section B.
  - (5) In cases where domestic violence involved a sexual touching or sexual assault between State employees, the HRO is also

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required to report the incident to their agency's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer or Title IX Officer, as appropriate.

- (6) If there is a report of sexual assault or abuse, the victim should be offered the services of the New Jersey State Sexual Assault Response Team.
- (7) Maintain the confidentiality of the employee and all parties involved, to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances, pursuant to A.5. below.
- (8) Upon the employee's consent, the employee may provide the HRO with copies of any TROs, FROs, and/or civil restraint agreements that pertain to restraints in the work place and ensure that security personnel are aware of the names of individuals who are prohibited from appearing at the work location while the employee who sought the restraining order is present. All copies of TROs and FROs must be kept in a separate confidential personnel file.

## 5. Confidentiality Policy

- a. In responding to reports of domestic violence, the HRO shall seek to maintain confidentiality to protect an employee making a report of, witnessing, or experiencing domestic violence, to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances and allowed by law.
- b. No provision of Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section A. shall supersede applicable laws, guidelines, standard operating procedures, internal affairs policies, or New Jersey Attorney General directives and guidelines that impose a duty to report.
- c. Policy 1581 and Regulation 1581 – Section A.5. shall not prevent disclosure where to do so would result in physical harm to any person or jeopardize safety within the workplace.
  - (1) When information must be disclosed to protect the safety of individuals in the workplace, the HRO shall limit the breadth and content of such disclosure to information reasonably necessary to protect the safety of the disclosing employee and others and comply with the law.

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- (2) The HRO shall provide advance notice to the employee who disclosed information, to the extent possible, if the disclosure must be shared with other parties in order to maintain safety in the workplace or elsewhere.
- (3) The HRO shall also provide the employee with the name and title of the person to whom they intend to provide the employee's statement and shall explain the necessity and purpose regarding the disclosure.
  - (a) For example, if the substance of the disclosure presents a threat to employees, then law enforcement will be alerted immediately.

- d. Policy 1581 and Regulation 1581 – Section A. does not supersede applicable laws, guidelines, standard operating procedures, internal affairs policies, or New Jersey Attorney General directives and guidelines where mandatory reporting is required by the appointing authority or a specific class of employees.

## 6. Confidentiality of Employee Records

- a. To ensure confidentiality and accuracy of information Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section A.6. requires the HRO to keep all documents and reports of domestic violence in a confidential personnel file separate from the employee's other personnel records.
- b. These records shall be considered personnel records and shall not be government records available for public access under the Open Public Records Act. See N.J.S.A. 47:1A-10.

## 7. Public Employer Domestic Violence Action Plan

- a. Public employers in the State of New Jersey shall develop an action plan to identify, respond to, and correct employee performance issues that are caused by domestic violence, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 11A:2-6a, and in accordance with the following guidelines:
  - (1) Designate an HRO with responsibilities pursuant to A.3. and A.4. above.

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- (2) **Recognize that an employee may need an accommodation as the employee may experience temporary difficulty fulfilling job responsibilities.**
- (3) **Provide reasonable accommodations to ensure the employee's safety. Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to, the following: implementation of safety measures; transfer or reassignment; modified work schedule; change in work telephone number or work-station location; assistance in documenting the violence occurring in the workplace; an implemented safety procedure; or other accommodation approved by the employer.**
- (4) **Advise the employee of information concerning the NJ SAFE Act; Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA); or Family Leave Act (FLA); Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI); or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); or other reasonable flexible leave options when an employee, or his or her child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, civil union partner, or other relationships as defined in applicable statutes is a victim of domestic violence.**
- (5) **Commit to adherence of the provisions of the NJ SAFE Act, including that the employer will not retaliate against, terminate, or discipline any employee for reporting information about incidents of domestic violence, as defined in Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section A., if the victim provides notice to their human resources office of the status or if the human resources office has reason to believe an employee is a victim of domestic violence.**
- (6) **Advise any employee, who believes he or she has been subjected to adverse action as a result of making a report pursuant to Policy and Regulation 1581 - Section B. of the civil right of action under the NJ SAFE Act.**
  - (a) **Advise any employee to contact their designated Labor Relations Officer, Conscientious Employees Protection Act (CEPA) Officer, and/or Equal Employment Opportunity Officer in the event they believe the adverse action is a violation of their collective bargaining agreement, the Conscientious Employees**

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Protection Act, or the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination and corresponding policies.

- (7) Employers, their designated HRO, and employees should familiarize themselves with Policy and Regulation 1581. Policy and Regulation 1581 shall be provided to all employees upon Board approval and to all new employees upon hiring.
- (8) Information and resources about domestic violence are encouraged to be placed in visible areas, such as restrooms, cafeterias, breakrooms, and where other resource information is located.

## 8. Resources

Resources and program information will be readily available to assist victims of domestic violence. These resources should be provided by the designated HRO to any victim of domestic violence at the time of reporting.

## 9. Distribution of Policy

The Civil Service Commission and the Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs shall distribute a Uniform Domestic Violence Policy, and any modifications thereto, to public employers. The Director of the Division of Local Government Services shall release Local Finance Notices setting forth any changes to the Uniform Domestic Violence Policy, as changes occur.

## 10. Other Applicable Requirements

In addition to Policy and Regulation 1581, the HRO and the public employer's appointing authority, if applicable, must follow all applicable laws, guidelines, standard operating procedures, internal affairs policies, and New Jersey Attorney General directives and guidelines that impose a duty to report. Additionally, to the extent that the procedures set forth in Policy and Regulation 1581 conflict with collective negotiated agreements or with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the provisions of the negotiated agreements and the provisions of FERPA control.

## 11. Policy Modification and Review

- a. A public employer may seek to modify Policy and Regulation 1581 to create additional protocols to protect victims of domestic violence,



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but may not modify in a way that reduces or compromises the safeguards and processes set out in the Uniform Domestic Violence Policy.

- b. The Civil Service Commission will review and modify their Uniform Domestic Violence Policy periodically and as needed.

## 12. Policy Enforceability

The provisions of the Uniform Domestic Violence Policy are intended to be implemented by the Civil Service Commission. These provisions do not create any promises or rights that may be enforced by any persons or entities.

## 13. Policy Inquiries and Effective Date

Any questions concerning the interpretation or implementation of the Uniform Domestic Violence Policy shall be addressed to the Chair/Chief Executive Officer of the Civil Service Commission, or their designee. The Uniform Domestic Violence Policy and Policy and Regulation 1581 shall be enforceable upon the HRO's completion of training on the Uniform Domestic Violence Policy and Policy and Regulation 1581.

## B. NJ SAFE Act – (N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1 et seq.)

1. The New Jersey Security and Financial Empowerment Act, N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1, et seq. (NJ SAFE Act), is a law that provides employment protection for victims of domestic or sexual violence.
2. Definitions (N.J.S.A. 34:11C-2)

The following terms are defined solely for the purpose of N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1 et seq. - NJ SAFE Act:

“Employee” means a person who is employed for at least twelve months by an employer, with respect to whom benefits are sought under the NJ SAFE Act, for not less than 1,000 base hours during the immediately preceding twelve-month period. Any time, up to a maximum of ninety calendar days, during which a person is laid off or furloughed by an employer due to that employer curtailing operations because of a state of emergency declared after October 22, 2012, shall be regarded as time in which the person is employed for the purpose of determining eligibility for leave time under the NJ SAFE Act. In making the determination, the base hours per week during the layoff

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or furlough shall be deemed to be the same as the average number of hours worked per week during the rest of the twelve-month period.

“Employer” means a person or corporation, partnership, individual proprietorship, joint venture, firm or company, or other similar legal entity which engages the services of an employee and employs twenty-five or more employees for each working day during each of twenty or more calendar work weeks in the then current or immediately preceding calendar year. “Employer” includes the State, any political subdivision thereof, and all public offices, agencies, boards, or bodies.

“State of emergency” means a natural or man-made disaster or emergency for which a state of emergency has been declared by the President of the United States or the Governor, or for which a state of emergency has been declared by a municipal emergency management coordinator.

**3. Regulations Relative to Unpaid Leave for Employees and Family Members Affected by Certain Offenses (N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3)**

- a. Any employee of an employer in the State of New Jersey who was a victim of an incident of domestic violence as defined in N.J.S.A. 2C:25-19, or a sexually violent offense as defined in N.J.S.A. 30:4-27.26, or whose parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner individual, or any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship, was a victim shall be entitled to unpaid leave of no more than twenty days in one twelve-month period, to be used in the twelve-month period next following any incident of domestic violence or any sexually violent offense as provided in N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3.

For purposes of N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3 and Regulation 1581 - Section B.3., each incident of domestic violence or any sexually violent offense shall constitute a separate offense for which an employee is entitled to unpaid leave, provided that the employee has not exhausted the allotted twenty days for the twelve-month period.

The unpaid leave may be taken intermittently in intervals of no less than one day, as needed for the purpose of engaging in any of the following activities as they relate to the incident of domestic violence or sexually violent offense:

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- (1) Seeking medical attention for, or recovering from, physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic or sexual violence to the employee or the employee's parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner individual, or any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship;
- (2) Obtaining services from a victim services organization for the employee or the employee's parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner individual, or any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship;
- (3) Obtaining psychological or other counseling for the employee or the employee's parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner individual, or any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship;
- (4) Participating in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocating, or taking other actions to increase the safety of the employee or the employee's parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner individual, or any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship, from future domestic or sexual violence or to ensure economic security;
- (5) Seeking legal assistance or remedies to ensure the health and safety of the employee or the employee's parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner, individual, or any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other

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individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship, including preparing for, or participating in, any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or derived from domestic or sexual violence; or

- (6) Attending, participating in, or preparing for a criminal or civil court proceeding relating to an incident of domestic or sexual violence of which the employee or the employee's parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner, or any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship, was a victim.

- b. An eligible employee may elect to use any accrued paid vacation leave, personal leave, or medical or sick leave of the employee, or any family temporary disability leave benefits provided pursuant to N.J.S.A. 43:21-27 during any part of the twenty-day period of unpaid leave provided under N.J.S.A 34:11C-3 and Regulation 1581 - Section B.3.a.

In such case, any paid leave provided by the employer, and accrued pursuant to established policies of the employer, or family temporary disability leave benefits, shall run concurrently with the unpaid leave provided under N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3.a and Regulation 1581 - Section B.3.a. and, accordingly, the employee shall receive pay pursuant to the employer's applicable paid leave policy, or family temporary disability leave benefits, during the period of otherwise unpaid leave. If an employee requests leave for a reason covered by both N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3.a and the "Family Leave Act," N.J.S.A. 34:11B-1 et seq. or the Federal "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993," 29 U.S.C. § 2601 et seq., the leave shall count simultaneously against the employee's entitlement under each respective law.

Leave granted under N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3 and Regulation 1581 - Section B. shall not conflict with any rights pursuant to the "Family Leave Act," the "Temporary Disability Benefits Law," N.J.S.A. 43:21-25 et al, or the Federal "Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993."

- c. Prior to taking the leave provided for in N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3 and Regulation 1581 - Section B.3.a., an employee shall, if the necessity for the leave is foreseeable, provide the employer with written notice of

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the need for the leave, unless an emergency or other unforeseen circumstance precludes prior notice. The notice shall be provided to the employer as far in advance as is reasonable and practical under the circumstances.

- d. Nothing contained in the NJ SAFE Act (N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1 et seq.) and Regulation 1581 - Section B. shall be construed to prohibit an employer from requiring that a period of leave provided pursuant to N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3 and Regulation 1581 - Section B. be supported by the employee with documentation of the domestic violence or sexually violent offense which is the basis for the leave.

If the employer requires the documentation, the employee shall be regarded as having provided sufficient documentation if the employee provides one or more of the following:

- (1) A domestic violence restraining order or other documentation of equitable relief issued by a court of competent jurisdiction;
- (2) A letter or other written documentation from the county or municipal prosecutor documenting the domestic violence or sexually violent offense;
- (3) Documentation of the conviction of a person for the domestic violence or sexually violent offense;
- (4) Medical documentation of the domestic violence or sexually violent offense;
- (5) Certification from a certified Domestic Violence Specialist or the director of a designated domestic violence agency or Rape Crisis Center, that the employee or employee's parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner, or any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship, is a victim of domestic violence or a sexually violent offense; or
- (6) Other documentation or certification of the domestic violence or sexually violent offense provided by a social worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, or other professional

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who has assisted the employee or employee's parent-in-law, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner, or any other individual related by blood to the employee, and any other individual that the employee shows to have a close association with the employee which is the equivalent of a family relationship, in dealing with the domestic violence or sexually violent offenses.

For the purpose of N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3.c and Regulation 1581 - Section B.3.d.:

- (1) "Certified Domestic Violence Specialist" means a person who has fulfilled the requirements of certification as a Domestic Violence Specialist established by the New Jersey Association of Domestic Violence Professionals;
  - (2) "Designated Domestic Violence Agency" means a county-wide organization with a primary purpose to provide services to victims of domestic violence, and which provides services that conform to the core domestic violence services profile as defined by the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families and is under contract with the Division for the express purpose of providing the services.
  - (3) "Rape Crisis Center" means an office, institution, or center offering assistance to victims of sexual offenses through crisis intervention, medical and legal information, and follow-up counseling.
- e. An employer shall display conspicuous notice of its employees' rights and obligations pursuant to the provisions of the NJ SAFE Act, in such form and manner as the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development shall prescribe, and use other appropriate means to keep its employees so informed.
- f. No provision of N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1 et seq. and Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section B. shall be construed as requiring or permitting an employer to reduce employment benefits provided by the employer or required by a collective bargaining agreement which are in excess of those required by the NJ SAFE Act. Nor shall any provision of N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1 et seq. and Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section B.

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be construed to prohibit the negotiation and provision through collective bargaining agreements of leave policies or benefit programs which provide benefits in excess of those required by the NJ SAFE Act. N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3.e and Regulation 1581 – Section B.3.f. shall apply irrespective of the date that a collective bargaining agreement takes effect.

Nothing contained in N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1 et seq. and Policy and Regulation 1581 – Section B. shall be construed as permitting an employer to:

- (1) Rescind or reduce any employment benefit accrued prior to the date on which the leave taken pursuant to the NJ SAFE Act commenced; or
- (2) Rescind or reduce any employment benefit, unless the rescission or reduction of the benefit is based on changes that would have occurred if an employee continued to work without taking the leave provided pursuant to Regulation 1581 – Section B.3.a.

g. All information provided to an employer pursuant to N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3.c and Regulation 1581 – Section B.3.d. above and any information regarding a leave taken pursuant to N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3.c and any failure of an employee to return to work, shall be retained in the strictest confidentiality, unless the disclosure is voluntarily authorized in writing by the employee or is required by a Federal or State law, rule, or regulation.

#### 4. Certain Actions by Employer Prohibited (N.J.S.A. 34:11C-4)

An employer shall not discharge, harass, or otherwise discriminate, retaliate, or threaten to discharge, harass, or otherwise discriminate or retaliate against an employee with respect to the compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment on the basis that the employee took or requested any leave to which the employee was entitled pursuant to N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3 of the NJ SAFE Act and Regulation 1581 – Section B.3. or on the basis that the employee refused to authorize the release of information deemed confidential pursuant to N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3.f and Regulation 1581 – Section B.3.g.

#### 5. Violations; Penalties (N.J.S.A. 34:11C-5)

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- a. Upon a violation of any of the provisions of N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3 and Regulation 1581 - Section B.3., or N.J.S.A. 34:11C-4 and Regulation 1581 - Section B.4., an employee or former employee may institute a civil action in the Superior Court for relief. All remedies available in common law tort actions shall be available to a prevailing plaintiff. The Court may also order any or all of the following relief:
- (1) An assessment of a civil fine of not less than \$1,000 and not more than \$2,000 for the first violation of any of the provisions of N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3 or N.J.S.A. 34:11C-4 and not more than \$5,000 for each subsequent violation;
  - (2) An injunction to restrain the continued violation of any of the provisions of N.J.S.A. 34:11C-3 or N.J.S.A. 34:11C-4;
  - (3) Reinstatement of the employee to the same position or to a position equivalent to that which the employee held prior to unlawful discharge or retaliatory action;
  - (4) Reinstatement of full fringe benefits and seniority rights;
  - (5) Compensation for any lost wages, benefits, and other remuneration;
  - (6) Payment of reasonable costs and attorney's fees.
- b. An action brought under N.J.S.A. 34:11C-5 shall be commenced within one year of the date of the alleged violation.
- c. A private cause of action provided for in N.J.S.A. 34:11C-5 shall be the sole remedy for a violation of N.J.S.A. 34:11C-1 et seq.

Adopted: