

(S. B. 558)

**(No. 79-2018)**

(Approved March 1, 2018)

**AN ACT**

To add a new Section 1.20 to Act No. 20-2017, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety Act,” and renumber Section 1.20 as Section 1.21 in order to create a new identification card for the relatives of the members of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau and the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps so they may receive the medical benefits granted under Section 1.19 of Act No. 20-2017; direct the Secretary of the Department of Health and the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety to conduct an educational campaign to raise awareness of the medical benefits to which the members of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau and the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps are entitled to under Section 1.19 of Act No. 20-2017; and for other related purposes.

**STATEMENT OF MOTIVES**

On April 10, 2017, Governor Ricardo Antonio Roselló-Nevarés signed H.B. 741 into law, thus creating Act No. 20-2017, better known as the “Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety Act.” The purpose of this Act is to develop a new integrated system for all of the components that administer public safety and the safety of citizens in Puerto Rico.

During the process of holding public hearings for this Bill, several organizations raised concerns about the possibility that, with the approval of this measure, they could lose their vested rights, and work benefits or obligations, such as the free medical service benefits granted under Act No. 53-1996, as amended, better known as the “Puerto Rico Police Act of 1996.” However, according to the committee report on the measure, part of the Bill’s legislative intent was to not violate any of the labor rights of the members of the new Department of Public

Safety. Consistent with the aforementioned, a new Section 1.19 was added to the original bill so that the members of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau and the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps as well as their relatives could continue to receive free medical services in the municipal and state medical-hospital facilities of Puerto Rico.

Notwithstanding the efforts made by the Legislative Assembly to preserve the medical benefits acquired by the members of the Puerto Rico Police and the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps, the mechanisms necessary to enable the rendering of such services do not exist at this time. Furthermore, in addition to the lack of awareness of the officials at the medical-hospital institutions with regards to the benefits granted under Act No. 20-2017, there is no official identification card indicating the kinship between the members of the aforementioned bureaus and their relatives. There have been instances in which the relatives of the members of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau and the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps have been denied free medical attention as a result of the aforementioned situation.

In light of the foregoing, it is our duty to create the mechanisms necessary to enable the rendering of the free medical services set forth in Section 1.19 of Act No. 20-2017. Through this Act, we empower the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety to issue valid identification cards for the relatives of the members of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau and the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps as well as direct the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and the Secretary of the Department of Public Health to conduct an educational campaign on the medical benefits granted under Act No. 20-2017.

***BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PUERTO RICO:***

Section 1.- A new Section 1.20 is hereby added to Act No. 20-2017, as amended, better known as the “Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety Act,” to read as follows:

“Section 1.20.- Identification Card.

In order to make feasible the rendering of the free medical services granted under Section 1.19 of this Act, the Secretary is hereby authorized to issue valid identification cards to the spouses, children, children under the age of twenty-one (21) who are enrolled in a higher education institution and/or disabled dependents of the members of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau and the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps. The identification card shall include the name, date of birth, and photo of the holder, as well as the name of the member of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau or the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps to whom the holder is related with his badge number or firefighter number, as the case may be, and their kinship. The Secretary shall determine the fee to be charged to employees for the identification card and under no circumstance shall such fee exceed the production cost of the card.”

Section 2.- Section 1.20 of Act No. 20-2017, as amended, is hereby renumbered as Section 1.21.

Section 3.- Educational Campaign.

The Secretary of the Department of Health and the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety are hereby directed to conduct an educational campaign in the Puerto Rico Police Bureau, the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps, and in all the medical facilities of the municipalities and Government of Puerto Rico in order to raise awareness of the medical benefits to which the members of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau are entitled to pursuant to this Act and the protocols thereof.

Section 4.- Rulemaking Authority.

The Secretary of Public Safety and the Secretary of the Department of Health are hereby empowered to promulgate or amend regulations as are necessary to achieve the purposes of this Act.

Section 5.- Effectiveness.

This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

## CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following **Act No. 79-2018 (S. B. 558)** of the **3<sup>rd</sup> Regular Session** of the **18<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico**:

**AN ACT** add a new Section 1.20 to Act No. 20-2017, as amended, known as the “Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety Act,” and renumber Section 1.20 as Section 1.21 in order to create a new identification card for the relatives of the members of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau and the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps so they may receive the medical benefits granted under Section 1.19 of Act No. 20-2017; direct the Secretary of the Department of Health and the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety to conduct an educational campaign to raise awareness of the medical benefits to which the members of the Puerto Rico Police Bureau and the Bureau of the Puerto Rico Firefighters Corps are entitled to under Section 1.19 of Act No. 20-2017; and for other related purposes.

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2022.

Mónica Freire-Florit, Esq.  
Director