

# SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE, Nos. 722 and 785

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 19, 2022

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably a Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 722 and 785.

As reported by the committee, this committee substitute establishes a three-year Crisis Response Support Pilot Program to make mental health services available to police departments responding to certain emergencies and appropriates \$2 million.

The committee substitute establishes a three-year Crisis Response Support Pilot Program. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide support to police departments or forces in the State when responding to a call that involves a person who is suffering from a mental health condition or substance use disorder and is in crisis.

Under the committee substitute, the Commissioner of Health is to select for participation in the pilot program two municipalities in each of the northern, central, and southern regions of the State that meet certain conditions.

The committee substitute requires the county prosecutor's office in each pilot county to designate a crisis response support coordinator who is to be responsible for coordinating with the Commissioner of Health to develop procedures for implementing the pilot program in each pilot municipality. In addition, under the committee substitute, each pilot municipality or pilot county shall contract with a nonprofit mental health service provider to provide support to the police department or force in the pilot municipality when responding to a call that involves a person who is suffering from a mental health condition or substance use disorder and is in crisis.

In addition, the committee substitute requires the Commissioner of Health, in consultation with the county crisis response support coordinators, to establish guidelines for the implementation of the pilot program in each pilot municipality.

Under the committee substitute, the governing body of a pilot municipality or pilot county is to provide documentation of the costs incurred to implement the pilot program to the Commissioner of Health. The Department of Health is to reimburse each pilot municipality or pilot county for the documented costs associated with implementing the pilot program.

The Commissioner of Health is required to submit a report evaluating the implementation and operation of the pilot program to the Governor and the Legislature within 90 days after the completion of the pilot program. The report is to recommend whether the pilot program should be continued, expanded, or made permanent.

Finally, the committee substitute appropriates from the General Fund to the Department of Health the sum of \$2 million to effectuate the committee substitute's provisions. The Commissioner of Health may also seek assistance from the federal government, private foundations, and any other source to fund the pilot program established by the committee substitute.

The committee substitute defines a "pilot county" as a county in which a municipality has been selected by the Commissioner of Health to participate in the pilot program established by the committee substitute. "Pilot municipality" is defined as a municipality selected by the Commissioner of Health to participate in the pilot program established by the committee substitute.