

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

with committee amendments

ASSEMBLY, No. 4154

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 18, 2023

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4154, with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes the New Jersey Center for the Study and Prevention of Suicide at the Rutgers School of Public Health.

The purpose of the center is to research the causes of and prevention and reduction measures for suicide. The center is to conduct research and derive scientific evidence on which sound suicide prevention policies and programs may be based. The center's research is to include the following: (1) the nature of suicide, including individual and societal determinants of suicide; (2) the individual, community, and societal consequences of suicide; and (3) treatment for suicidal thoughts at the individual, community, and societal levels.

The amended bill requires the center to work on a continuing basis with State policymakers to identify, implement, and evaluate innovative suicide prevention policies and programs. To help ensure a successful, long-term effort to understand and prevent suicides, the center is to recruit and provide specialized training opportunities for new researchers who have recently completed college degrees. As a supplement to its own research, the center may administer a small grant program for research on suicide. Research funds under the grant program are to be awarded on the basis of merit as determined by an open, competitive peer review process that assures objectivity, consistency, and high quality.

The amended bill provides that, one year following the establishment of the center, the Rutgers School of Public Health is to submit a report to the Governor and Legislature regarding the work of the center. The report is to include information on the center's current research projects, the amount and sources of funding utilized, and the future direction of the center's research. If the center administers a grant program for suicide research, the report is to also include information on the grants made, pending grants, and accomplishments of the program.

The amended bill appropriates \$500,000 to the center and stipulates that the Legislature is to annually appropriate such monies as are necessary to fund the activities and research of the center. The

center may solicit and accept any grants, gifts, donations, or other funds from public or private sources, which may be available for research related to suicide.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to appropriate \$500,000 to Rutgers, The State University, to effectuate the provisions of the bill.