

SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO **SENATE, No. 1069**

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 8, 2024

The Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1069.

As amended, this bill establishes a program to provide reimbursement, subject to available State or federal funding, to qualified county governments that provide transportation services to disabled veterans to and from medical counseling appointments to any United States Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare facility in this State or a contiguous state for healthcare services.

The bill defines "disabled veteran" for this purpose to mean any citizen and resident of this State now or hereafter honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active service in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States, a Reserve component thereof, or the National Guard and who has been or will be declared by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to have a service-connected disability.

The bill appropriates \$2 million to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to effectuate the county reimbursement purpose of the bill.

In addition, the bill revises the current transportation assistance program to remove the restriction that the appointment be for a medical counseling appointment for a service-connected condition approved and authorized by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments limit the new county transportation reimbursement program and the current transportation assistance program only to United States Department of Veterans Affairs facilities in this State or a contiguous state.