SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4788

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 11, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4788 (1R), with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill supplements P.L.2020, c.97, the Fiscal Year 2021 annual State appropriations act, to add a general provision transferring unclaimed assets from the Unclaimed Personal Property Trust Fund to the General Fund for appropriation to the offices of the 21 county prosecutors.

Each county would receive an amount equal to the amount of unclaimed assets seized by each county prior to January 1, 2017, pursuant to the State's civil forfeiture laws (N.J.S.2C:64-1 et seq.), and escheated to the Unclaimed Personal Property Trust Fund on or after July 1, 2020.

The proposed general provision requires the funds distributed to each county to be used for law enforcement costs, including, but not limited to, the funding of a county-wide police body-worn camera and video storage program. The amount transferred to any county cannot exceed $2.4 million.

These assets were held by each county for three years following their seizure and escheated to the State's Unclaimed Personal Property Trust Fund, in accordance with standard operating procedures issued by the Attorney General regarding forfeiture program administration.

The bill also requires the State Treasurer to transmit a report to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and the Assembly Appropriations Committee detailing the amount transferred to each county and the purposes for which funds were expended.

As reported, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 3044, as also amended and reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments:

- require the transfer of applicable unclaimed assets to all county prosecutors' offices;
- provide that the amount transferred to any single county cannot exceed $2.4 million; and

- require the State Treasurer to provide a report to the Legislature's appropriations committees detailing the amount transferred to each county and the purposes for which funds were expended;

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal information on this bill is not currently available.