ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5502

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 15, 2021

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5502 (1R).

This bill requires the Commissioner of Community Affairs, in consultation with the Attorney General, to establish a program to provide grants to organizations which offer or seek to offer mentoring services programs. Preference is to be given to those organizations which offer or seek to offer programs that provide youth with alternatives to membership in or association with criminal street gangs.

An organization which elects to participate in the grant program is to submit an application to the commissioner in a form and manner prescribed by the commissioner. The application is to outline: the applicant's proposal to offer existing or develop new mentoring services programs; sample activities and social service offerings; existing funds available to the applicant for providing mentoring services; and the amount of the applicant's grant request.

The bill stipulates that based upon the application, and subject to the availability of funds, the commissioner is to award a grant to each approved grant applicant to offer existing or develop new mentoring programs.

The commissioner, to the extent possible, is to equitably distribute grant awards to successful applicants in the northern, central, and southern regions of the State, and to seek a cross section of approved grant applicants from urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Each organization awarded a grant to offer existing or develop new mentoring services programs is required to submit to the commissioner, on an annual basis, a report on the status of the programs. The report is to include, but not be limited to: information on the number of the participants in the program; program hours of operation; regular program activities and social service offerings; and the number and qualifications of program staff, including volunteers. These reports would be used by the commissioner to evaluate future grant applications.

The bill defines "mentoring services programs" as programs administered by a duly incorporated non-profit organization to provide advice, support, opinion, or instruction to persons 21 years of age or

younger in an effort to direct that person's judgment or conduct in a positive manner.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the bill may result in an indeterminate increase in State expenditures. Any additional State costs, including administrative expenses, would depend on the size and scope of the grant program, which is to be determined by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).