ASSEMBLY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5845

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 16, 2021

The Assembly Community Development and Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5845.

This bill establishes the "Amistad Commission Exemplary Award Program." The purpose of the program is to identify outstanding educators, and the school district in which the educator is employed, for special recognition who have shown a commitment to furthering student knowledge on the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African-Americans to our society.

Under the bill, school districts, charter schools, and renaissance school projects will submit nominations, on an application to be developed by the commission, by February 1 of each year of an exemplary teacher who deserves recognition for efforts to:

(1) ensure that all New Jersey students acquire a broad and deep knowledge of all people who contributed to the founding and development of New Jersey and the United States;

(2) promote the self-esteem, confidence, and identity of students who previously may not have learned about past and living examples of people of their own cultural identity who have had positive impacts upon the American story; and

(3) provide exemplary lessons, units of study, or courses of study that demonstrate effective instruction of students in alignment with the Amistad curriculum and which lessons, units, or courses of study may be replicated by other educators.

Recipients of the Amistad Commission Exemplary Award will be named annually by the Amistad Commission Exemplary Award Committee. The committee will be an ad hoc committee, the members of which, except for the executive director of the Amistad Commission, will be appointed annually. The committee will consist of:

(1) one member appointed by the Governor;

(2) one member of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate;

(3) one member of the General Assembly appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly;

(4) one member appointed by the New Jersey Education Association;

(5) one member appointed by the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association; and

(6) the executive director of the Amistad Commission, or a designee, who will serve as the chair of the Amistad Commission Exemplary Award Committee.

Under the bill, the award committee will annually select two teachers to receive the Amistad Commission Exemplary Award: one teacher from a school that provides instruction in any of the grades kindergarten through eight; and one teacher from a school that provides instruction in any of the grades nine through 12. Recipients of this award will each receive $2,500 in recognition of their extraordinary contributions.

Under the bill, each school district in which the teacher award recipient is employed will also receive the Amistad Commission Exemplary Award. Each school district that receives an award will receive $2,500, which will be used to assist other teachers in the school district implement the curriculum and teaching techniques of the teacher award recipient.

The bill appropriates from the General Fund the sum of $10,000 to the Amistad Commission to implement the provisions of this bill.

As released by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 3654 (1R), as that bill was also reported by the committee on this date.