

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 273

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 15, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman GERARD SCHARFENBERGER

District 13 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Respectfully urges Office of Attorney Ethics to examine and audit actions of legal aid organizations.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** respectfully urging the Office of
2 Attorney Ethics to examine and audit the actions of legal aid
3 organizations.

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5 **WHEREAS**, According to Pro bono NJ, every year one in three people
6 living in poverty has one civil legal problem requiring the
7 assistance of an attorney; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Legal aid organizations provide vital free legal services to
9 low income and disadvantaged residents of the State; and

10 **WHEREAS**, Any legal aid attorney providing inadequate representation
11 or acting in discriminatory or in other offensive ways toward their
12 clients is particularly problematic as these clients may not have the
13 option to be represented by another attorney within the organization
14 and cannot afford outside alternative legal representation; and

15 **WHEREAS**, The Office of Attorney Ethics as the investigative and
16 prosecutorial arm of the Supreme Court of New Jersey in
17 discharging the Court's constitutional responsibility to supervise
18 and discipline New Jersey attorneys can examine and audit the
19 actions of these legal aid organizations to ensure that they are
20 providing adequate services to the communities and individuals
21 they represent; now, therefore,

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23 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
24 Jersey:

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26 1. This House respectfully urges the Office of Attorney Ethics
27 to examine and audit the actions of legal aid organizations that
28 provide pro bono work to low-income and disadvantaged residents
29 of the State, in order to ensure that legal aid organizations that
30 receive any State funding are providing adequate services to the
31 communities and individuals they represent. In addition, this
32 resolution respectfully urges the Office of Attorney Ethics to
33 review, document, and investigate any complaints made by clients
34 regarding mistreatment, threats, or sexual intimidation by their
35 attorneys.

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37 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
38 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
39 Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court and the
40 Administrative Director of the Courts.

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STATEMENT

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46 This resolution urges the Office of Attorney Ethics (OAE) to
47 examine and audit the actions of legal aid organizations that provide
48 pro bono work to low-income and disadvantaged residents of the

1 State, in order to ensure that legal aid organizations that receive any
2 State funding are providing adequate services to the communities
3 and individuals they represent. In addition, the OAE is urged to
4 review, document, and investigate any complaints made by clients
5 regarding mistreatment, threats, or sexual intimidation by their
6 attorneys.