SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 170

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 24, 2020

The Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 170.

This bill creates the "Veterans Assistance Grant Program" in the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs to provide grants to governmental entities and nonprofit organizations for certain veterans' services.

This bill requires the department to provide select governmental entities and nonprofit organizations the funds to provide mental health services, family counseling services, job training and employment services, and housing assistance services to veterans who live in the State. The department will manage the grant program and award grants to governmental entities and nonprofit organizations to provide veterans' services based upon application criteria selected by the department. Any grant made through the grant program will be subject to a grant agreement, which contains terms and conditions considered appropriate by the department and are consistent with the purposes of this bill.

As part of the program, the department will establish the "Veterans Assistance Grant Fund," which will provide moneys for the grant program. The grant fund will be populated with: (1) moneys that the Legislature may appropriate; (2) moneys received by the department as gifts, grants, or donations; (3) any return on investment of moneys deposited in the grant fund; (4) fees collected from applicants; and (5) other moneys made available including, but not limited to, funds provided by agreement with private investors, the federal government, banks, and other lending institutions to effectuate the purposes of the bill.

The bill requires the department to report to the Governor and Legislature on an annual basis concerning the allocation of the moneys credited to the grant fund and the effect grant funding has on the veteran population of the State. As part of the report, the bill requires the Adjutant General to opine on the advisability of continuing, expanding, or modifying the grant program.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.