SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR

SENATE, No. 1400

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 26, 2020

The Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee reports favorably a committee substitute for Senate Bill No. 1400.

This committee substitute establishes a task force on returning members of the United States Armed Forces and reserve components, and the New Jersey National Guard. The purpose of the task force will be to identify and review the issues and concerns facing members of the United States Armed Forces, New Jersey National Guard, and a reserve component of the United States Armed Forces returning from overseas deployments involving the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and recommend the measures the State should take to address and remedy the issues and concerns, including legislation if appropriate.

The task force will: examine current data, research, programs, and initiatives related to the physical, social, emotional, and mental impact of military service upon service members and their families; identify effective strategies for promoting lifelong physical, social, emotional, and mental health of service members and their families; and develop recommendations to implement those strategies, including legislation if appropriate.

The task force will prepare and issue a final report on its findings, conclusions, and recommendations, including any recommendations for legislation that it deems appropriate. The task force will expire 30 days after submission of its report.

The substitute also creates a permanent study commission to study the definitions related to veteran status. The study commission will: compile and analyze the various definitions of “veteran,” “disabled veteran,” “service-disabled veteran,” and any other definition of veteran in the statutes; identify statutes with unique and restrictive requirements for the various definitions and determine if the requirements may be revised to achieve more uniform definitions; identify potential revisions to be made to the statutes to provide for a clearer understanding of the requirements for qualification under the various definitions; consult with the military community for expertise and input; and use the findings of the study commission, and the expertise from the military community, to recommend changes to the various definitions and submit the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in its annual reports.