ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 3164

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 3, 2022

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3164 (1R).

This bill creates the New Jersey Legislative Youth Council. The council would provide a forum for the youth of this State to participate in the democratic process; to advise the Legislature and its committees, commissions, and task forces on the perspectives, opinions, needs, development, and welfare of the youth of the State; and on the most effective and efficient policies, programs, and services that the State could provide for the youth of this State. The council would also research, analyze, discuss, and make specific recommendations in the areas of civics education; drugs and substance abuse; emotional and physical health; employment and economic opportunities; environmental protection; gun violence and school safety; homelessness and poverty; mental health; safe environment for youth; sexual harassment and violence; youth services; and youth bias and hate crimes. In each two-year term of the New Jersey Legislature, the council would submit in writing a series of policy recommendations to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the General Assembly, the Minority Leader of the Senate and the Majority Leader of the General Assembly. The council could express its position publicly on legislation pending before the New Jersey Legislature that is directly relevant to the needs, development, and welfare of the youth of this State.

The bill defines "youth" to mean a person at least 15 years of age but under the age of 23 years.

The council would be comprised of 44 members, 40 public members and four members of the New Jersey Legislature.

Each of the 40 public members must have been a resident of New Jersey for at least 15 years and must be between the ages of 15 and 23 years of age at the time of appointment. Each public member would represent one of the 40 districts of the New Jersey Legislature. The 40 public members would be inclusive and reflective of the racial, gender, geographic, urban, rural, and economic diversity of their district. No public member can be a family member or an employee of a person who is holding, or who held in the prior five years, any appointive or elective public office.

Public members would serve for a term of two years, and if eligible, may be reappointed to serve for one additional term.

The three legislators in each legislative district would appoint one public member to the council, based on applications submitted from persons who reside in that district.

The four legislative members would be appointed, one each, by the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the General Assembly, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the General Assembly. The legislative members would serve as non-voting, advisory members, appointed solely for the purpose of assisting the public members of the council in conducting the council's meetings and activities, and in fulfilling the council's purpose.

The bill provides for the creation of an executive board for the council, and requires the council to meet at least four times a year to conduct business, and to hold at least two public hearings each year. The bill permits the Legislature to accept donations from public or private sources to support the activities of the council, with certain restrictions. Donations by a person or entity could not exceed $500 per calendar year in the aggregate.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 4987, which was amended and also reported by the committee on this same date.