

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4409

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 24, 2024

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 4409.

This bill establishes the “Mass Violence Care Fund” in the Department of Law and Public Safety. The fund is to be administered by the Victims of Crime Compensation Office (VCCO) and be used solely to provide a sustainable source of funds to provide coverage for physical and behavioral health care expenses related to a mass violence event that are not paid for by insurance or any other source.

The moneys in the fund are to be invested and reinvested by the Director of the Division of Investment in the Department of the Treasury. All costs of administering the fund, including the necessary and proper expenses incurred by the VCCO in administering the fund, are to be paid from the fund.

Under the bill, the VCCO is to make distributions from the fund in accordance with the following criteria and any rules or regulations adopted by the VCCO establishing eligibility criteria: 1) only gains, interest, dividends, and other revenue earned on the moneys in the fund and any amounts gifted to the fund may be expended; 2) payments from the fund may be made only for an eligible victim’s eligible expense; 3) payments from the fund to a victim for an eligible expense may not be made sooner than three years after the applicable mass violence event; and 4) payments may not be made to satisfy a financial commitment for services or expenses that would otherwise have been paid from another public or private source, including but not limited to Medicaid or private insurance.

Under the bill, the VCCO is to adopt rules and regulations establishing eligibility criteria for victims, mass violence events, and healthcare and other expenses and the VCCO is not to make any distributions from the fund prior to the adoption of the rules and regulations.

Further, the bill requires the Attorney General to establish a Mass Violence Care Fund Working Group. The purpose of the working group is to identify specific options and eligibility criteria to help ensure that individuals adversely affected by a mass

violence event are provided some financial relief from physical and behavioral health care costs not paid for by insurance or some other source.

The bill requires the working group to consider and determine: 1) gaps in payments for physical and behavioral health care services for victims of mass violence events; 2) methods of investing the moneys in the Mass Violence Care Fund by the bill to ensure sustainable annual financial returns; 3) options for determining eligibility for distribution from the fund, including parameters for: a) who is considered a victim of a mass violence event; b) which healthcare costs are considered eligible expenses; and c) what constitutes a mass violence event; and 4) any other items the working group determines are necessary to carry out the purposes of the fund.

The working group is to consist of the following members: 1) a member of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate; 2) a member of the General Assembly, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; 3) the Attorney General or a designee; 4) the Commissioner of Health or a designee; 5) the State Treasurer or a designee; 6) the Director of the Victims of Crime Compensation Office or a designee; and 7) a representative of the VTV Family Outreach Foundation.

Under the bill, the working group is to issue a report containing its recommendations for eligibility requirements and rules and any recommendations for legislation to the VCCO no later than nine months after the bill's effective date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments remove the General Fund appropriation of \$10 million to the Department of Law and Public Safety for the Mass Violence Care Fund.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal information for this bill is currently unavailable.