

SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3911

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 18, 2023

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 3911.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill sets the minimum age at which a juvenile can be adjudicated delinquent at 14 years or older.

Under the New Jersey Code of Juvenile Justice, “delinquency” is defined as the commission of an act by a juvenile which, if committed by an adult, would constitute a crime of the first through fourth degree; a disorderly persons offense or petty disorderly persons offense; or a violation of any other penal statute, ordinance, or regulation, with certain exceptions. The code currently defines a “juvenile” as a person under 18 years of age.

This bill, as amended, changes the definition of delinquency in the code to establish the minimum age at which a juvenile could be adjudicated delinquent at 14 years of age or older.

In addition, the amended bill requires the Attorney General to establish a Juvenile Justice working group. The purpose of the group is to advise on the implementation of this bill. The working group is to consist of members appointed by the Attorney General, in consultation with the Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice System and is to include, but not be limited to, the following members: a representative of the mental health community, a representative of law enforcement, three representatives of community organizations involved in civil rights and social justice; a representative of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families; the Public Defender, or a designee; a member of the faculty of a law school in this State with clinical experience in juvenile justice matters; and the Administrative Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, or a designee.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

1) require the Attorney General to establish a Juvenile Justice working group to advise on the implementation of this bill;

2) provide that the working group is to consist of members appointed by the Attorney General, in consultation with the

Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice System and is to include, but not be limited to, the following members: a representative of the mental health community, a representative of law enforcement, three representatives of community organizations involved in civil rights and social justice; a representative of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in the Department of Children and Families; the Public Defender, or a designee; a member of the faculty of a law school in this State with clinical experience in juvenile justice matters; and the Administrative Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, or a designee; and

3) provide that the bill will take effect on the first day of the nineteenth month after enactment; as introduced, the bill was effective immediately.