

# ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

## ASSEMBLY, No. 13

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 5, 1996

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 13 (Aca).

Assembly Bill No. 13 (Aca) is part of a legislative package, along with Assembly Bills 12, 14 and 15, that will establish the "Work First New Jersey" program in the Department of Human Services as the State's consolidated public assistance program, replacing the current programs of aid to families with dependent children (AFDC), AFDC emergency assistance, general assistance (GA), GA emergency assistance, the GA employability program, and the Family Development Initiative.

This bill addresses: time limits for eligibility for "Work First New Jersey" program benefits, with certain exceptions; the administration of the "Work First New Jersey" program; the collection of information for the commissioner by agencies and entities working to effectuate the purposes of this bill; the allocation of federal funds available for administrative costs and the reimbursement of administrative costs incurred; the expansion of the current electronic benefit distribution system; the imposition of penalties for the misuse of "Work First New Jersey" program benefits, as well as the misuse of benefits provided under any other program included in the electronic benefit distribution system; the use of the Social Security number as a common identifier; and the implementation of technological investments to create a Statewide community-based electronic network to link federal, State and local government agencies, nonprofit entities and private business entities, for the effective and efficient exchange of information relating to, and management of, the "Work First New Jersey" program and other related programs; and county agency procedures. For a more detailed description of this bill, the Assembly Policy and Regulatory Oversight Committee statement of this date, should be consulted.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

The overall costs of the legislative package cannot be determined at this time because the impact of many of the provisions will not be known until the program is implemented.

During a hearing on the Senate version of these bills, the

Commissioner of Human Services stated that the overall gross cost of the programs under "Work First New Jersey Program" is now approximately \$1.3 billion and it is the intention of the department to maintain at that level for several fixed years. Submission of a State plan to the federal government (which has been done) followed by enactment of the "Work First New Jersey" program to comply with the new federal mandates qualifies the State for the federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Block Grant in the amount of \$404 million annually, approximately \$50 to \$60 million more than the State recently received under existing programs.

The commissioner stated that he would present a revised summary budget for Fiscal Year 1997 for the programs being consolidated, reflecting the changes in revenues, costs and requirements necessitated by the new federal law and the proposed bills.