

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 15

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MAY 6, 1996

By Assemblymen ZECKER, ASSELT, Roma, Assemblywoman J. Smith, Assemblymen DiGaetano, O'Toole, Weingarten, Azzolina, DeSopo, Assemblywoman Allen, Assemblymen Corodemus, Lance, Geist, Assemblywomen Crecco, Heck, Assemblymen Malone, Cottrell, Gibson, T. Smith, Blee, LeFevre and Kelly

1 AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION concerning training of judicial, prosecutorial and
2 law enforcement personnel.

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4 WHEREAS, The New Jersey Supreme Court Committee to Review the
5 Conrad Jeffrey Matter in its report, dated October 1995, identified serious
6 deficiencies in the current criminal justice system concerning individuals
7 who, like Conrad Jeffrey, are declared incompetent to stand trial and
8 transferred to a psychiatric institution for evaluation and treatment; and

9 WHEREAS, The report noted that the goal of the professionals within the
10 mental health community to cure these individuals of their mental illness
11 often overshadows the responsibility to restore these individuals to
12 competency so that they can stand trial; and

13 WHEREAS, The responsibility of prosecutors to insure that these individuals
14 stand trial once they are declared competent to do so is frustrated by the
15 lack of interaction between the mental health community and the criminal
16 justice system; and

17 WHEREAS, The goals of the criminal justice system and the goals of the
18 professionals in the mental health community with regard to these
19 individuals who are incompetent to stand trial may be dissimilar, and more
20 importantly, may have deadly consequences as in the Conrad Jeffrey
21 case; and

22 WHEREAS, The professionals in the mental health community and the
23 professionals in the criminal justice system must work together to insure
24 that another incident like the Conrad Jeffrey case does not occur again;
25 now, therefore,

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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

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29 1. That the Supreme Court of the State of New Jersey is respectfully
30 requested to develop and approve an enhanced training course for judges
31 with regard to incompetence and insanity.

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2 2. That the Department of Law and Public Safety is requested to
3 develop and approve an enhanced training course for prosecutors with
4 regard to incompetence and insanity.

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6 3. That the Department of Corrections and the Department of Human
7 Services are requested to develop and approve an enhanced training course
8 for mental health professionals working in the psychiatric institutions with
9 regard to incompetence and insanity .

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11 4. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution signed by the Speaker of
12 the General Assembly and attested by the Clerk thereof, shall be transmitted
13 to the Chief Justice and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the
14 State of New Jersey, the Attorney General of the State of New Jersey, the
15 Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, the Commissioner of Human
16 Services and to the Governor of the State of New Jersey.

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STATEMENT

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21 This Assembly resolution respectfully requests that the State Supreme
22 Court, the Department of Law and Public Safety, the Department of
23 Corrections and the Department of Human Services institute a training
24 program for judges, prosecutors and mental health professionals working in
25 psychiatric institutions with regard to incompetence and insanity.

26 This resolution was prompted by the report issued by the New Jersey
27 Supreme Court Committee to Review the Conrad Jeffrey Matter.

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32 Requests the State Supreme Court, the Department of Law and Public Safety,
33 the Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services to
34 institute a training program in mental incompetence and insanity for judges,
35 prosecutors and mental health professionals working in psychiatric
36 institutions.