

SENATE, No. 680

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 5, 1996

By Senator LaROSSA

1 AN ACT concerning the funding of the public schools and
2 supplementing chapter 22 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.
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4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

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7 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of chapter 22 of Title 18A of the
8 New Jersey Statutes and chapter 4 of Title 54 of the Revised Statutes
9 or any other law, rule or regulation to the contrary, the amount of
10 property taxes assessed, levied and collected in order to fund the
11 schools shall not exceed the amount of property taxes assessed, levied
12 and collected to fund the schools for the 1995-96 school year.

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14 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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19 This bill provides that the amount of property taxes assessed, levied
20 and collected in order to fund the schools shall not exceed the amount
21 of property taxes assessed, levied and collected to fund the schools for
22 the 1995-96 school year.

23 Over the past 21 years, the State Supreme Court has declared three
24 school funding statutes unconstitutional, including the current Quality
25 Education Act (QEA). For the past two years, the schools have been
26 funded by temporary measures which have essentially frozen State aid.
27 Today the State seems no closer to a funding formula which can
28 provide both an equitable source of revenue and an equitable
29 distribution of that revenue. It is time now for the Legislature to take
30 action to solve the school funding crisis rather than reacting to the
31 decisions of the Supreme Court.

32 This is a companion bill to A-597, which establishes a commission
33 to recommend a new method for the funding of the public schools. It
34 is the purpose of the bills to establish an effective deadline by which
35 the commission will have issued a report, and the Legislature and
36 Governor will have approved legislation to provide a new method for

1 the funding and distribution of school aid. In its finding of July 12,
2 1994, that the QEA was unconstitutional, the Supreme Court retained
3 jurisdiction and indicated that it may intervene if a new funding statute
4 is not in place by September, 1996.

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9 Freezes the amount of property tax for school funding at the 1995-96
10 level.