

SENATE, No. 870

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 26, 1996

By Senator CARDINALE

1 AN ACT concerning the Office of Legislative Services and amending
2 P.L.1979, c.8.

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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. Section 17 of P.L.1979, c.8 (C.52:11-70) is amended to read as
8 follows:

9 17. a. All requests for legal assistance, information or advice and
10 all information received by the Office of Legislative Services in
11 connection with any request for fiscal, budgetary or research service
12 or for the drafting or redrafting of bills, resolutions or amendments
13 thereof for introduction in the Legislature shall be regarded as
14 confidential and no information in respect thereto shall be given to the
15 public or to any person other than the person or persons making such
16 request or any officer or person duly authorized to have such
17 information, unless and until the person making such request consents
18 thereto or the subject matter thereof shall have been made public in
19 some manner.

20 b. The Office of Legislative Services shall assist the members of the
21 Legislature in avoiding duplicate bill introductions, as follows:

22 (1) Whenever the office receives a request for a bill or resolution
23 to be drafted or redrafted that appears to be identical or substantively
24 similar to a prior request that it has received from a member of the
25 same House, it shall forthwith notify both members that a subsequent
26 request is made and suggest a joint request. The office shall identify
27 each member to the other, but shall provide no other information in
28 respect to either request, unless duly authorized by the member
29 making the pertinent request. Unless a request is withdrawn or a joint
30 request is made, the office shall draft or redraft the bill or resolution
31 first for the prior requester.

32 (2) Whenever the office receives a request for a bill or resolution
33 to be drafted or redrafted that appears to be identical or substantively
34 similar to a bill or resolution that was previously introduced in the

EXPLANATION - Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 same House, it shall forthwith notify the requester that an identical or
2 substantively similar bill or resolution has been previously introduced
3 and suggest that the request be withdrawn.

4 (3) Whenever the office finds that a bill or resolution was
5 introduced that appears to be identical or substantively similar to a bill
6 or resolution that was previously introduced in the same House, it
7 shall forthwith notify the member or members who introduced each bill
8 or resolution, that identical or substantively similar bills or resolution
9 have been introduced.

10 (cf: P.L.1979, c.8, s17.)

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12 2. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall apply to requests
13 received and bills introduced in each full biennial session occurring
14 after that date.

15 16 17 STATEMENT

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19 This bill amends the governing statutes of the Office of Legislative
20 Services to require the office to assist the members of the Legislature
21 in avoiding the introduction of duplicate bills. The bill sets forth
22 specific procedures for the OLS to follow whenever it receives
23 duplicate drafting requests from members of the same House, receives
24 a drafting request for a bill already introduced in the House, or finds
25 that a duplicate bill is introduced. The procedures require the OLS to
26 provide information to the involved legislative requesters or sponsors.

27 Currently, the OLS is not charged statutorily with the responsibility
28 of assisting legislators in this regard. The office has adopted a policy
29 of responding to requests on a "first come--first served" basis. But the
30 confidentiality restrictions placed on the office by law do not permit
31 the OLS to divulge names of legislative requesters to each other.

32 The purpose of this bill is not to provide the OLS with authority to
33 prevent duplicate bills from being introduced, or to refuse to respond
34 to a legislator's request. This would be inappropriate for a service
35 agency of the Legislature. Rather, the bill directs the OLS to provide
36 legislators with names so that the legislators may communicate with
37 each other and provide direction to OLS with respect to bill
38 introductions.

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43 Requires OLS to assist Legislature in avoiding duplicate bill
44 introductions.