

SENATE, No. 2077

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MAY 15, 1997

By Senators CONNORS, McGREEVEY,
Palaia, Bubba and Casey

1 AN ACT establishing a Public School Educational Funding
2 Commission.

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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. There is created a commission to be known as the "Public
8 School Educational Funding Commission." The commission shall
9 consist of nine members as follows: two members to be appointed by
10 the President of the Senate, which members shall not be of the same
11 political party; two members to be appointed by the Speaker of the
12 General Assembly, which members shall not be of the same political
13 party; four public members with knowledge and experience in the area
14 of public and school finance to be appointed by the Governor, no more
15 than two of whom shall be of the same political party; and the
16 Commissioner of Education.

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18 2. All appointments shall be made within 30 days after the
19 operative date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the
20 commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original
21 appointments were made. Members of the commission shall serve
22 without compensation.

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24 3. The commission shall organize within 30 days after the
25 appointment of its members and shall select a chairperson and a vice
26 chairperson from among its members and a secretary who need not be
27 a member of the commission.

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29 4. It shall be the duty of the commission to study the issues
30 associated with the funding of the public schools and to devise two
31 alternative State revenue raising plans to fund the core curriculum
32 content standards adopted by the State Board of Education in May of
33 1996. The State revenue raising plans shall provide for adequate funds
34 to offset any loss of revenue due to the reduction in local real property
35 taxes approved by the voters at the 1997 general election pursuant to
36 the constitutional amendment set forth in SCR of 1997. The plans

1 shall not recommend the use of revenue sources that would result in
2 a reduction in the level of aid appropriated to municipalities, school
3 districts, and counties and the level of aid appropriated for programs
4 that provide a direct benefit to individuals, below the total levels of aid
5 appropriated therefore in the annual appropriations act for the fiscal
6 year in which SCR of 1997 is adopted.

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8 5. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
9 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county or
10 municipal department, board, bureau, commission or agency as it may
11 require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

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13 6. The commission may meet and hold hearings at the place or
14 places it designates during the sessions or recesses of the Legislature.
15 The commission shall issue a final report containing the two alternative
16 funding plans to the Governor and the Legislature no later than six
17 months following its organizational meeting.

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19 7. This act shall take effect immediately and shall become operative
20 upon the voters approval of SCR of 1997.

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23 STATEMENT
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25 This bill creates a commission to be known as the "Public School
26 Educational Funding Commission." The commission would consist of
27 nine members selected as follows: two members to be appointed by
28 the President of the Senate, which members shall not be of the same
29 political party; two members to be appointed by the Speaker of the
30 General Assembly, which members shall not be of the same political
31 party; four public members with knowledge and experience in the area
32 of public and school finance to be appointed by the Governor, no more
33 than two of whom shall be members of the same political party; and
34 the Commissioner of Education.

35 It is the duty of the commission to study the issues associated with
36 the funding of education and to propose two alternative State revenue
37 raising plans to fund the core curriculum content standards. The State
38 revenue raising plans must provide for adequate funds to offset any
39 loss of revenue due to the reduction in local real property taxes
40 approved by the voters at the 1997 general election pursuant to the
41 constitutional amendment set forth in SCR of 1997. The plans may
42 not use sources of revenue already appropriated for aid programs.

43 The commission is required to issue a final report containing the
44 two State revenue raising plans, to the Governor and the Legislature
45 no later than six months following its organizational meeting.

46 This bill is a companion to SCR of 1997 which proposes a

1 constitutional amendment that provides that for the 2000-2001 school
2 year and thereafter local real property taxes cannot be used to fund the
3 core curriculum content standards. The State would be responsible for
4 funding the core curriculum content standards with State revenues.
5 Under the constitutional amendment the "Public School Educational
6 Funding Commission" would propose two State revenue raising plans
7 to fund the core curriculum content standards and the Legislature
8 would be required to enact one of the plans, or any combination of the
9 two plans. If the Legislature failed to enact one of the plans, or any
10 combination of the two plans, then the two plans would be placed on
11 the ballot at the next general election and the plan with the greatest
12 number of affirmative votes would be the method by which State
13 revenues would be raised to fund the core curriculum content
14 standards. The Legislature would be permitted to enact changes to the
15 method of funding the core curriculum content standards, but a
16 reduction in the total funding for the standards would have to be
17 approved by the voters of the State.

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22 Establishes the Public School Educational Funding Commission.