

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2356

with Senate committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 8, 1998

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2356 with amendments.

Senate Bill No. 2356 appropriates \$5 million to the Judiciary from the General Fund for court services. Specifically, the bill appropriates \$2,250,000 for additional personnel for the Family Courts, in the area of domestic violence hearing officers and other support staff, and \$750,000 for additional personnel for Probation Services to handle rising adult and juvenile caseloads. This appropriation will be used to fund approximately 155 new positions in the family courts and 50 new positions for probation officers.

Additionally, the bill appropriates \$2,000,000 for certain costs required by the Unification Letter of Agreement as incorporated by reference into section 2 of P.L.1994, c.162 (C.2B:11-1 et seq.), the "Judicial Employee Unification Act." This appropriation will fund the costs incurred from January 1, 1995 through the end of fiscal year 1998 for health benefit cost differentials for certain court personnel in Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Middlesex and Ocean counties.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments add a language provision to require the Judiciary to use funds from the supplemental appropriation for the Family Courts to hire certified public accountants to assist and advise the courts in each county in child support cases where the payor is seeking court review of an order and alleges the inability to comply with the order due to changes in financial circumstances.

FISCAL IMPACT

This bill appropriates \$5 million to the Judiciary from the General Fund for salaries and wages of court personnel.