

ASSEMBLY HOMELAND SECURITY AND STATE
PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 1663

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 24, 2021

The Assembly Homeland Security and State Preparedness Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1663.

As reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 1663 makes permanent the "New Jersey Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NJNSGP)" in the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP), which pursuant to P.L.2017, c.246 expired in January 2020.

This bill as amended provides that the NJNSGP is directed to provide grants out of any annually appropriated funds to eligible nonprofit organizations at the greatest risk of attack (1) to hire certain permanent or temporary security personnel, and (2) for acquisition of certain target hardening equipment.

The bill as amended requires the OHSP to annually request as part of its budget proposal a minimum of \$5,000,000 to fund the NJNSGP. The NJNSGP shall award grants of up to \$10,000 for nonprofit organizations to hire permanent or temporary security personnel for the purpose of preparing against threats, attacks, or other violent acts. Security personnel under the bill include federal, State, county, and municipal law enforcement officers, special law enforcement officers, and licensed security officers. In addition, the bill awards grants of up to \$50,000 for nonprofit organizations to acquire target hardening equipment. The bill as amended requires that any funds distributed under the program are not to be utilized for travel or security investments made outside the State.

The bill as amended defines an "eligible nonprofit organization" as a nonprofit organization located in this State which is exempt from federal taxation pursuant to federal law.

Applicants for grants from the program are permitted to apply for either security personnel or equipment grants, or both, in each year of the program, but OHSP may only award funds for either security personnel or equipment in a fiscal year. The grant may be used by the applicant to hire security personnel for an event in the State primarily organized by the applicant away from the applicant's physical location as recorded on the grant application and for which the applicant bears legal liability. To receive a grant, the applicant is to be evaluated as to

whether it is at high risk for a terrorist attack, threats, domestic extremism, and other violent acts.

The OHSP is to assign a preference for applicants who have not received either a federal or State security grant in the last two grant cycles.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2021-2022 session pending technical review. As reported, this bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments provide technical updates and clarifications, and increase minimum grant appropriation.

The committee amendments clarify: 1) funds should be dedicated to those nonprofit organizations at greatest risk; 2) the Director of Office of Homeland Security and State Preparedness may adjust appropriated grant amounts for security personnel and target hardening based on the final availability of funds, analytical trends, and emerging threats; and 3) the costs of hiring security personnel are to be limited to events in State and provide guidelines to this requirement.

Finally, the amendments increase the minimum requested appropriation to \$5 million.