

ASSEMBLY, No. 5958

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 8, 2021

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT
District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Directs use of 21st Century Improvement Fund to establish individualized account access system.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning e-court programs and amending P.L. 2014,
2 c.31.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. Section 12 of P.L.2014, c. 31(C.2B:1-7) is amended to read
8 as follows:

9 12. a. The Supreme Court, subject to the limitations set forth in
10 subsection b. of this section, may adopt Rules of Court to revise or
11 supplement filing fees and other statutory fees payable to the court
12 for the sole purpose of funding:

13 (1) the development, maintenance and administration of a
14 Statewide Pretrial Services Program;

15 (2) the development, maintenance and administration of a
16 Statewide digital e-court information system; and

17 (3) the provision to the poor of legal assistance in civil matters
18 by Legal Services of New Jersey and its affiliates.

19 b. All existing filing fees and other statutory fees payable to
20 the court on the effective date of this section shall not be increased
21 or supplemented more than \$50 in the aggregate for each fee
22 beginning on the effective date of this section.

23 c. As used in sections 12 through 19 of P.L.2014, c.31
24 (C.2B:1-7 through C.2B:1-13):

25 "Digital e-court information system" shall mean a Statewide
26 integrated system that includes but is not limited to electronic filing,
27 electronic service of process, electronic document management,
28 electronic case management, electronic financial management, and
29 public access to digital court records and court matters generally,
30 including an individualized account access and notification system
31 for individuals using email addresses and telephone numbers about
32 pending court matters including but not limited to violations and
33 court dates; and

34 "Pretrial Services Program" shall mean the pretrial services
35 program established pursuant to section 11 of P.L.2014, c.31
36 (C.2A:162-25).

37 (cf: P.L.2014, c.31, s.12)

38
39 2. Section 15 of P.L.2014, c. 31(C.2B:1-10) is amended to read
40 as follows:

41 15. Monies annually credited in the "21st Century Justice
42 Improvement Fund" shall be allocated as follows:

43 a. \$22 million credited annually to the fund shall be
44 appropriated annually to the Judiciary to be used to fund the
45 development, maintenance and administration of a Statewide

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 Pretrial Services Program established pursuant to section 11 of
2 P.L.2014, c.31 (C.2A:162-25);

3 b. \$10 million credited annually to the fund shall be
4 appropriated annually to the Judiciary to be used to fund the
5 development, maintenance and administration of a Statewide digital
6 e-court information system, which shall include an individualized
7 account access and notification system for individuals using email
8 addresses and telephone numbers about pending court matters
9 including but not limited to violations and court dates. An
10 appropriation made pursuant to this subsection shall not be used to
11 replace appropriations from other sources for Judiciary information
12 technology; and

13 c. \$10.1 million credited annually to the fund shall be
14 appropriated annually to the Department of the Treasury for
15 distribution to Legal Services of New Jersey and its affiliates to
16 facilitate the provision to the poor of legal assistance in civil
17 matters, which shall supplement other funds as may be appropriated
18 from any other source in a fiscal year for the same purpose. All
19 State funds distributed to Legal Services of New Jersey shall be
20 used exclusively for the provision to the poor of legal assistance in
21 civil matters.

22 d. Any amount remaining in the fund after the appropriation of
23 funds as provided in subsections a., b., and c. of this section shall be
24 retained by the Judiciary for the purpose of developing,
25 maintaining, and administering the Pretrial Services Program or for
26 court information technology. The monies credited to the fund shall
27 not be used for any purpose other than those purposes set forth in
28 this section and section 14 of P.L.2014, c.31 (C.2B:1-9).
29 (cf: P.L.2014, c.31, s.15)

30
31 3. This act shall take effect immediately.
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34 STATEMENT

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36 The 21st Century Improvement Fund, section 14 of P.L.2014. c.
37 31 (C.2B:1-9), is a dedicated, nonlapsing fund annually credited
38 with a sum equal to the yearly revenue derived from the incremental
39 amounts of certain fees payable to the court. One of the dedicated
40 purposes of the fund is the development, maintenance and
41 administration of the Statewide digital e-court information system.
42 Presently, the e-court system broadly includes public access to
43 digital court matters. This bill would expand the public access
44 function to include access to court matters generally, including an
45 individualized account access and notification system for
46 individuals using email addresses and telephone numbers about
47 pending court matters including but not limited to violations and
48 court dates.

1 The bill further amends section 14 of P.L. 2014. c. 31 (C.2B:1-
2 10) to ensure that a portion of the funds allocated for the
3 development, maintenance and administration of a Statewide digital
4 e-court information system shall be used for expanded purpose.

5 It is the sponsor's view that enhanced notification technology
6 can lead to increased access and accessibility to the court system
7 which, in turn, can prevent such issues as missed court dates and
8 failure to settle matters, arrests, warrant issues and arrests for
9 individuals. The use of notification technology at the account is
10 used in such areas as online banking and notifications about health
11 and self-care appointments, and should be available to individuals
12 involved at all levels the justice system.