

# SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **SENATE, No. 385**

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED JUNE 21, 2021

The Senate Judiciary Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 385.

Currently, the Office of the Attorney General is responsible for training all law enforcement officers in the handling and investigation of domestic violence reports. Law enforcement officers are required to attend an initial training within 90 days of appointment or transfer. In addition, the officers are required to attend an annual in-service training of at least four hours.

In 2012, the Office of the Attorney General established an online domestic violence training program for law enforcement officers. The online training program is intended to be used as a “stand-alone” program by officers to meet their annual in-service training requirement or to be used in conjunction with other forms of training.

This bill, as amended, would insure that law enforcement officers are periodically required to attend in-person, instructor-led training. Under the bill, every three years the statutorily required in-service training could be satisfied through in-person instructor-led training.

In addition, the bill would require training for assistant county prosecutors involved in the handling of domestic violence cases. The training would be consistent with the training requirement for judges and judicial personnel. Initial training would be within 90 days of appointment or transfer and the prosecutors would attend an annual in-service training of at least four hours.

The required training, administered by the Division of Criminal Justice and the Administrative Director of the Courts, on the handling of domestic violence matters would address various aspects of domestic violence, including the dynamics of domestic violence, the impact of domestic violence on children, the impact of trauma on survivors, safety risks for lethality in domestic violence cases, safety planning and services for survivors of domestic violence, and the impact of racial bias and discrimination on survivors and marginalized communities. Additionally, the training would include guidelines on when incidents trigger mandatory or discretionary arrests.

This bill embodies recommendations 13 and 14 of the Report of the Supreme Court Ad Hoc Committee on Domestic Violence issued June 2016.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

The committee amendments to the bill:

- add specific topics on various aspects of domestic violence to the required training for law enforcement officers, assistant prosecutors, judges, and judicial personnel as described in the statement above; and

- make references to the Attorney General and Administrative Director of the Courts consistent as the individuals responsible for the training for law enforcement, judges, and judicial personnel.