ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 518

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 4, 2024

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 518.

As amended, the bill requires the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs (DMVA) to coordinate with county governments an expansion of the service provided under the Senior Citizens and Disabled Residents Transportation Assistance Program to provide disabled veterans with transportation to and from medical counseling appointments for service-connected conditions within the State. The department will help counties identify transportation service needs in the veterans community for the purposes outlined in the bill and provide financial assistance to the counties to cover the cost of such service expansions.

The bill defines "disabled veteran" to mean any citizen and resident of this State now or hereafter honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active service in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States, a Reserve component thereof, or the National Guard and who has been or will be declared by the United States Veterans Administration, or its successor, to have a service-connected disability.

As amended, the bill requires four percent of the amount appropriated under current law to the New Jersey Transit Corporation from the Casino Revenue Fund to be used for the issuance of grants to counties for the purpose of providing transportation services to disabled veterans to and from medical counseling appointments for service-connected conditions, across county boundaries, but within the State.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to require DMVA to coordinate with county governments for an expansion of the county transportation services provided under the Senior Citizens and Disabled Residents

Transportation Assistance Program. The amendments require DMVA to help counties identify transportation service needs for disabled veterans and provide financial assistance, in addition to the portion designated by the bill of certain appropriations to New Jersey Transit Corporation made under current law.

The amendments require that four percent of the amount appropriated to the corporation from the Casino Revenue Fund be provided to counties in the form of grants for the purpose of providing transportation services to disabled veterans to and from medical counseling appointments for service-connected conditions, across county boundaries, but within the State.