SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1616

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 16, 2024

The Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1616.

This bill provides tuition benefits at public institutions of higher education in this State to New Jersey residents who are members of a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States and to certain children and surviving spouses of those members.

Under current law, a member of the New Jersey National Guard is permitted to attend regularly-scheduled courses at a public institution of higher education and receive up to 16 credits per semester tuition-free. The law also provides a tuition benefit to a child or surviving spouse of a member of the National Guard who was or is killed in the performance of his or her duties, if available classroom space permits and the tuition-paying students constitute the minimum number required for the course.

This bill amends current law to extend these tuition benefits to a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States who is a resident of New Jersey, and to a child or surviving spouse of such a member of the reserves who was or is killed in the performance of his or her duties. The bill requires the child or surviving spouse to be a resident of New Jersey for the tuition benefits to apply.

For purposes of the bill, the reserve components of the Armed Forces of the United States include the Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Reserve, Air Force Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve.

The bill takes effect immediately upon enactment and is first applicable to the academic year following enactment.

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.