

**SENATE, No. 3793**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**221st LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 10, 2024

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JOHN F. MCKEON**

**District 27 (Essex and Passaic)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Makes FY2024 supplemental appropriation of \$750,000 providing for additional attorneys dedicated to juvenile matters.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1 A SUPPLEMENT to the annual appropriations act for the fiscal year  
2 ending June 30, 2024, P.L.2023, c.74.

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

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7 1. In addition to the amounts appropriated under P.L.2023, c.74,  
8 the annual appropriations act for the fiscal year ending June 30,  
9 2024, there is appropriated from the General Fund the following  
10 amount for the purpose specified:

11

12 **80 Special Government Services**

13 *82 Protection of Citizens' Rights*

14 *57 Trial Services to Indigents*

15 *2021 Office of the Public Defender*

16

17 **Direct State Services**

18 57-2021 Trial Services to Indigents ..... \$750,000

19 Total Direct State Services appropriation,

20 Trial Services to Indigents ..... \$750,0000

21 ***Direct State Services:***

22 57 Trial services to Indigents..... \$750,000

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24 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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27 STATEMENT

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29 This bill supplements the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations act to  
30 provide \$750,000 in supplemental funding to the Office of the  
31 Public Defender's (OPD) Trial Services to Indigents program. The  
32 OPD is in-but-not-of the Department of Treasury.

33 More specifically, the funding will provide for eight additional  
34 attorneys dedicated to juvenile post-dispositional work and juvenile  
35 caseload reduction in some of the highest volume regions, namely,  
36 Essex and Atlantic counties.

37 According to the OPD, youth custodial sentences are on the rise.  
38 In 2022, New Jersey had 277 youth in custody. As of April 4, 2024,  
39 there were 339. The OPD notes that the length of stay is also on the  
40 rise. For example, in Atlantic County, the length of a custodial  
41 sentence for a juvenile has increased by 359 percent between 2022  
42 and 2024. The OPD estimates a 25-30 percent increase in youth  
43 defense caseloads in the next fiscal year.

44 P.L.2021, c.383 expanded the mandate of the OPD to require  
45 representation of juvenile defendants, many of whom are on the  
46 cusp of reentering society as adults. This has resulted in an increase  
47 in juvenile cases for the OPD.