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H.XXX

Introduced by Committee on Judiciary

Date:

Subject: Coronavirus Relief Fund; House Judiciary Committee

Recommendations

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes recommendations for appropriations from the Coronavirus Relief Fund for judiciary-related issues.

An act relating to Coronavirus Relief Fund appropriations for judiciary-related issues

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAMS;

CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of \$130,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Department of Corrections in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of remote operations of the Vermont Network’s Domestic Violence Accountability Programs.

(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section:

1           (1) is necessary because Domestic Violence Accountability Programs  
2           are a crucial element in the treatment of domestic violence offenders to reduce  
3           their likelihood of committing future offenses; and

4           (2) is due to COVID-19 because the pandemic has required these  
5           treatment groups to immediately transition to remote operations without any  
6           funding to support the process.

7           Sec. 2. INCARCERATED AND REENTERING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC  
8                           AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;  
9                           APPROPRIATION

10           (a) The sum of \$197,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief  
11           Fund to the Department of Corrections in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of  
12           supporting incarcerated and reentering victims of domestic and sexual  
13           violence.

14           (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from  
15           the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section:

16           (1) is necessary because community support services are an integral part  
17           of recovery for victims of domestic and sexual violence; and

18           (2) is due to COVID-19 because during the pandemic the Department of  
19           Corrections has been forced to isolate some incarcerated individuals and limit  
20           the in-person contacts of victims reentering the community, resulting in  
21           reduced access to support services that can be ameliorated by establishing  
22           remote contact systems and more extensive use of support personnel.

1           Sec. 3. LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC AND  
2                           SEXUAL VIOLENCE; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;  
3                           APPROPRIATION

4           (a) The sum of \$80,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief  
5           Fund to the Vermont Center for Crime Victim’s Services in fiscal year 2021  
6           for purposes of providing no cost legal representation to victims of domestic  
7           and sexual violence through the Vermont Network’s Justice for Victims Legal  
8           Clinic.

9           (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from  
10           the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section:

11                   (1) is necessary because victims of domestic and sexual violence must  
12                   participate in court proceedings in order for justice to be served; and

13                   (2) is due to COVID-19 because the pandemic has made it more  
14                   difficult for victims to find attorneys and understand how they may participate  
15                   remotely in judicial proceedings.

16           Sec. 4. FORENSIC NURSING PROGRAM REMOTE ACCESS BY  
17                           VICTIM’S ADVOCATES; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;  
18                           APPROPRIATION

19           (a) The sum of \$160,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief  
20           Fund to the Vermont Center for Crime Victim’s Services in fiscal year 2021  
21           for purposes of providing victim’s advocates with remote access to the  
22           Forensic Nursing Program.

1       (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from  
2       the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section:

3           (1) is necessary because the presence of victim’s advocates during  
4       forensic examinations of sexual violence victims is necessary for their  
5       recovery; and

6           (2) is due to COVID-19 because victim’s advocates are restricted by  
7       hospitals from being physically present with victims during the pandemic as an  
8       infection control strategy.

9       Sec. 5. OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL’S STRATEGIC PLAN  
10           FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROJECT; CORONAVIRUS  
11           RELIEF FUND; APPROPRIATION

12       (a) The sum of \$30,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief  
13       Fund to the Office of the Attorney General in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of  
14       the Office’s Strategic Plan for Equity and Inclusion project.

15       (b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from  
16       the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section:

17           (1) is necessary because race-based disparities and implicit bias continue  
18       to persist throughout the State of Vermont; and

19           (2) is due to COVID-19 because the disproportionate impact of the  
20       pandemic on people of color has exacerbated the impact of existing race-based  
21       disparities and implicit bias so severely that immediate action is necessary.

22       Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

(Draft No. 3.1 – H.XXX)  
6/10/2020 - EBF - 10:15 AM

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1        This act shall take effect on passage.