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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 from COVID-19 because during the pandemic the
19 Department of Corrections has been forced to isolate some incarcerated
20 individuals and limit the in-person contacts of offenders reentering the
21 community, resulting in a reduced access to support services that can be

1 ameliorated by establishing remote contact systems and more extensive use of
2 support personnel.

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 (a) The sum of \$160,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
22 Fund to the Vermont Center for Crime Victim’s Services in fiscal year 2021

1 for purposes of providing victim’s advocates with remote access to the
2 Forensic Nursing Program.

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

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

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

11 Sec. 5. DIVISION OF RACIAL EQUITY; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;
12 APPROPRIATION

13 (a) The sum of \$500,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
14 Fund to the Agency of Administration Division of Racial Equity in fiscal year
15 2021 for purposes of increasing supports to people of color in light of data
16 indicating that they are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

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

19 (1) is necessary because people of color are more vulnerable to poor
20 COVID-19 health outcomes due to such factors as income inequality, wealth
21 disparity, access to safe housing and transportation, incarceration rates, and
22 criminal justice policies; and

1 (2) is due to COVID-19 because reliable data clearly indicates that the
2 pandemic disproportionately impacts people of color.

3 Sec. 6. OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL’S STRATEGIC PLAN
4 FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION PROJECT; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF
5 FUND; APPROPRIATION

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

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 race-based disparities and implicit bias continue
12 to persist throughout the State of Vermont; and

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

16 Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

17 This act shall take effect on passage.