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

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

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

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

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

(2) is due to COVID-19 because during the pandemic the Department of
Corrections has been forced to isolate some incarcerated individuals and limit
the in-person contacts of victims reentering the community, resulting in
reduced access to support services that can be ameliorated by establishing
remote contact systems and more extensive use of support personnel.
Sec. 3. LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE; CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND;

APPROPRIATION

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

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

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

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

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

APPROPRIATION

(a) The sum of $160,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to the Vermont Center for Crime Victim’s Services in fiscal year 2021 for purposes of providing victim’s advocates with remote access to the Forensic Nursing Program.
(b) The General Assembly determines that the expenditure of monies from the Coronavirus Relief Fund as set forth in this section:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sec. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE
This act shall take effect on passage.