

January 13, 2014

**ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 4339  
(First Reprint)**

To the General Assembly:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Assembly Bill No. 4339 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

This bill codifies the establishment of an existing toll-free helpline, the "Mom2Mom Peer Support Program" helpline, currently operated by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families ("DCF") in conjunction with University Behavioral HealthCare of Rutgers University. The helpline provides peer support for mothers of children with special needs, in addition to clinical services, telephone assessments, a network of service providers, live chat, and support groups. The bill requires DCF to continue the operation of the helpline with University Behavioral HealthCare of Rutgers University and requires an annual appropriation from the General Fund for the maintenance of the helpline.

This bill emphasizes the critical importance of a peer support helpline to assist mothers of children with special needs. Indeed, the "Mom2Mom Peer Support Program" helpline plays an important role in my Administration's efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and families in our State, and, since its 2010 establishment, has fielded over 28,000 calls from mothers, caregivers, and their families.

I applaud the sponsors for their efforts to facilitate the continued operation of a peer support helpline for mothers of children with special needs. However, the bill's requirement for an annual appropriation from the General Fund to DCF for the maintenance of the helpline is unwarranted. Since becoming Governor, I have repeatedly called for responsible budgeting that carefully calibrates revenues and expenditures for adoption

of a balanced budget through the annual appropriations act at the beginning of each fiscal year. Regrettably, and notwithstanding my calls for fiscal restraint, the Legislature has continued to propose expenditures outside of the State Budget. The required annual appropriation proposed in Assembly Bill No. 4339 is another such example.

As noted previously, my Administration has fully supported and funded the "Mom2Mom Peer Support Program" helpline since 2010 without the need for an appropriation by the Legislature outside of the annual appropriations process. Accordingly, I recommend language enabling the maintenance of this important program into the future, while simultaneously eliminating any potential circumvention of the budget process or unnecessary burden on the taxpayers of New Jersey.

I herewith return Assembly Bill No. 4339 (First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

<u>Page 2, Section 1, Lines 8-25:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Line 27:</u>	Delete "2." and insert "1."
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Line 29:</u>	After "University" insert "or another entity"
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Line 30:</u>	After "helpline" insert "or similar helpline"
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Line 38:</u>	Delete "Healthcare" and insert "HealthCare"
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Line 38:</u>	After "University" insert "or another entity"
<u>Page 3, Section 2, Line 9:</u>	After "University" insert "or another entity"
<u>Page 3, Section 2, Line 13:</u>	After "University" insert "or another entity"
<u>Page 3, Section 3, Line 19:</u>	Delete "3." and insert "2."
<u>Page 3, Section 3, Line 20:</u>	After "University" insert "or another entity"
<u>Page 3, Section 4, Line 28:</u>	Delete "4." and insert "3."
<u>Page 3, Section 4, Line 31:</u>	Delete "Healthcare" and insert "HealthCare"

Page 3, Section 4, Line 31:

After "State University"  
insert "or another entity"

Page 3, Section 5, Lines 40-42:

Delete in their entirety

Page 3, Section 6, Line 44:

Delete "6." and insert "4."

Page 3, Section 6, Line 46:

After "University" insert  
"or another entity"

Respectfully,

[seal]

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Christopher S. Porrino

Chief Counsel to the Governor