

August 23, 2019

**SENATE BILL NO. 3309**  
**(First Reprint)**

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 3309 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

I commend the Legislature for continuing to work with my Administration to address the scourge of gun violence. In fact, this bill is part of a larger gun safety package that was drafted by the Legislature in close collaboration with my Administration. Eight of these bills were sent to my desk on June 20<sup>th</sup> of this year, and I am proud that my Administration has already signed the other seven bills into law.

Violence intervention programs apply approaches that are suited to address gun violence in the hardest-hit neighborhoods. These programs identify individuals who are most at risk of being affected by gun violence and work to reduce gun violence through targeted interventions. Community-based organizations across New Jersey are already engaged in detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying and treating high-risk individuals, and changing conflict resolution norms, with many of these organizations doing this work with little to no government support. Now the State will be able to support these community organizations that work tirelessly to stem gun violence in their cities. My Administration is committed to making New Jersey safe for all its residents, and this legislation will be instrumental in achieving that goal.

This bill creates the New Jersey Violence Intervention Program ("NJVIP"), which will provide grants to community-based nonprofit organizations, municipalities, health agencies, and law enforcement agencies in communities with disproportionately high rates of gun violence and homicides. These grants will be used to implement, enhance, or expand evidence-based violence reduction initiatives.

Our job is not done once NJVIP is established; rather we must ensure that the program is successfully implemented in order to maximize its impact. As such, both State and federal resources will be necessary to ensure NJVIP's effectiveness and viability. While I expect the Legislature to contribute to the program's funding, my Administration will also use federal Victims of Crime Act ("VOCA") Assistance grants to support NJVIP. VOCA Assistance grants are provided to states to help fund agencies and organizations that provide services to crime victims, and due to changes in the funding formula for those grants, the amount of federal money provided to New Jersey has increased substantially over the past five years. However, in spite of this increase, New Jersey has woefully underutilized VOCA Assistance grants to support violence intervention programs. Indeed, the previous administration consistently failed to channel federal resources to violence intervention programs. My Administration will not repeat this mistake. VOCA Assistance grants will be used to fund programs that we know will reduce gun violence in our communities.

As a result, it is important to ensure that the rules governing NJVIP do not violate the criteria for qualifying for VOCA Assistance grants. It would be unwise to cut off NJVIP from such an important source of funding. This means that the language in Senate Bill No. 3309 (First Reprint) must more closely align with VOCA Assistance grant eligibility criteria. To that end, my recommended changes add language that incorporates and emphasizes targeted services and clarifies that hospitals receiving NJVIP grants must be not-for-profit or use not-for-profit entities to run their violence intervention programs. Furthermore, my recommended changes will allow the Attorney General to establish any additional conditions or limitations to ensure that VOCA Assistance grant funding is awarded in compliance with federal law.

Therefore, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 3309  
(First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

- Page 3, Section 3, Line 28: After "municipalities," insert "not-for-profit"
- Page 3, Section 3, Line 38: After "firearms" insert "via the provision of targeted services to victims affected by crime or violence"
- Page 3, Section 3, Line 41: After "individuals" insert "who are victims affected by crime or violence and are"
- Page 3, Section 3, Line 43: After "violence" insert ","
- Page 4, Section 3, Line 1: After "who" insert "are victims affected by crime or violence and"
- Page 4, Section 3, Line 3: After "victimized" insert "again"
- Page 4, Section 3, Lines 3-4: Delete "based on the best available medical and public health research"
- Page 4, Section 3, Line 16: After "(1) a" insert "not-for-profit"
- Page 4, Section 3, Line 16: After "hospital" insert "or a not-for-profit entity operating within, on behalf of or in partnership with a hospital"
- Page 4, Section 3, Line 25: After "reducing" insert ", through targeted services,"
- Page 4, Section 3, Line 44: After "operated by a" insert "not for profit"
- Page 4, Section 3, Line 45: Delete "by the" and insert "to operate a program within, on behalf of, or in partnership with a"
- Page 5, Section 4, Line 4: Delete "a."
- Page 5, Section 4, Line 5: After "General." insert "A formal Notice of Availability of Funding shall be posted prior to the time for acceptance of applications. However, at a minimum, in"
- Page 5, Section 4, Line 5: Delete "In"
- Page 5, Section 4, Line 7: Delete "(1)" and insert "a."
- Page 5, Section 4, Line 10: Delete "(2)" and insert "b."
- Page 5, Section 4, Line 15: Delete "(3)" and insert "c."
- Page 5, Section 4, Line 18: Delete "(4)" and insert "d."
- Page 5, Section 4, Lines 20-30: Delete in their entirety

Page 6, Section 8, Line 23:

After "8." insert "a."

Page 6, Section 8, Line 27:

Insert "b. Available federal funding under the "Victims of Crime Act of 1984," 42 U.S.C. s.10601 et seq., may, to the extent permitted by federal law, be used to award grants for initiatives authorized under this section and to promote the purposes of the New Jersey Violence Intervention Program, which funding shall be in addition to any other funds appropriated, contributed, awarded or otherwise provided for these purposes. The Attorney General may establish or provide for such additional conditions, limitations and requirements on New Jersey Violence Intervention Program applicants and grantees as he or she deems appropriate to promote the purposes of this section and to ensure that any grants relying on federal funding sources or participation are awarded in compliance with federal law."

Respectfully,

[seal]

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Matthew J. Platkin

Chief Counsel to the Governor