

# ASSEMBLY BUDGET COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### SENATE, No. 2715

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 17, 2013

The Assembly Budget Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2715.

This bill requires the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) to prepare and distribute informational pamphlets on how parents can limit a child's exposure to media violence.

The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that by the age of 18, the average American child will have viewed 200,000 acts of violence on television. Moreover, exposure to, or involvement in, violence can disrupt normal childhood development and profoundly effect a child's mental, physical, and emotional well-being. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Psychological Association, and the Media Awareness Network, extensive viewing of violence on television and other electronic devices lead to greater aggressiveness in children. As adults, children exposed to such violence are more likely to commit serious crimes, use violence to discipline their own children, and treat spouses in an aggressive manner.

This bill, therefore, requires the DOE to prepare and make available on the department's Internet website, information on how a parent can limit a child's exposure to violence on television, cell phones, computers, and other electronic devices. The bill directs the DOE to update this information whenever new information about a child's exposure to violence on television and other electronic devices becomes available.

This bill identifies information to be included, but not limited to: research and statistics on how violent behavior increases after exposure to violent films, music, television, or video games; scientific findings that show children who play violent video games are more likely to be involved in physical altercations with classmates, perform poorly on academic tasks, and are unable to relate to adults in positions of authority; factors that increase the probability a child will be at risk of violent behavior; symptoms of a child's overexposure to violence; predictors of violent behavior in children; and effective strategies, based on a child's age and stage of development, that will help a parent monitor or restrict a child's exposure to violence on television and other electronic devices.

This bill requires the DOE to prepare an informational pamphlet that contains the information posted on its website and update the pamphlet as necessary. The bill directs the DOE to distribute the pamphlet, at no charge, to all school districts in the State, and make additional copies available to nonpublic schools upon request. The bill further directs each school district to distribute the pamphlet to the parents or guardians of students attending the district in each school year, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

This bill requires the DOE to promulgate regulation to effectuate the act.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This bill is likely to cause the DOE to incur additional expenses in designing, printing, and distributing informative materials. On an annual basis the printing costs may lead to additional costs of up to \$50,000. The other costs are indeterminate, but are anticipated to be minimal relative to the DOE's overall operational costs.