SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, No. 1635

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 10, 2024

The Senate Commerce Committee reports favorably the Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1635.

This bill amends current law by creating licensure for mortuary and embalming science and licensure for mortuary science. Both types of licensee would be overseen by the State Board of Mortuary Science of New Jersey. Under the bill, a practitioner of mortuary and embalming science would provide services under what is currently recognized as mortuary science. The bill provides that a practitioner of mortuary science would solely provide funeral directing services.

The education, including continuing education, and examination requirements, as well as other provisions of the law, are modified to incorporate this update to the mortuary science licensure to be regulated by the board. This also includes updates to qualifications for licensure, including by not requiring a person to be a resident of New Jersey and lowering the age to eighteen to qualify. However, for a person to be licensed as what is now known as a practitioner of mortuary and embalming science, the requirement remains that that class of licensure still be proficient in both funeral directing and embalming. Additionally, updates are made to certain terminology, including references to "trainees" changed to "interns" and "school of mortuary science" to "program of funeral service education."

The funeral directing industry is regulated, in large part, by the "Mortuary Science Act." Prior to the enactment of that law, the licensing board was directed to issue three separate licenses: one for embalming, one for funeral directing, and a third for both embalming and funeral directing. The 1952 law consolidated the three licenses into one, issuing thereafter a license for a practitioner of mortuary science, who were to be proficient in both embalming and funeral directing.

For religious, cultural, environmental, and philosophical reasons, an increasing number of funerals center around disposition without embalming. This bill, by allowing funeral services not involving embalming to be provided by persons licensed by the board who are not embalmers, would facilitate the response by the funeral services industry to New Jersey's diverse population and to societal changes.