SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 818

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 12, 2026

The Senate Commerce Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 818.

This bill requires the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety to hire additional staff to alleviate the professional license application backlog. The bill appropriates $10,000,000 in fiscal years 2027, 2028, and 2029 for the hiring of additional staff.

The various State professional boards are responsible for both the processing of initial license requests and the periodic licensure renewals as required by statute. There is currently a significant backlog of these license requests in several of the regulated professions within the Division of Consumer Affairs.

Starting in fiscal year 2016, language has been included in the annual appropriations act allowing the transfer of funds from the professional boards to other organizations within the Department of Law and Public Safety. These transfers may have taken away flexibility the boards would have to hire additional staff to address backlogs. This bill appropriates $10,000,000 in each of the cited three fiscal years to allow for both the immediate hiring of additional staff to alleviate the current backlog as well as to ensure ongoing funding to maintain proper levels of service for license processing across the regulated professions.

The bill also requires the division to provide an annual report that provides details on the spending authorized by the bill, and the effect of the spending on division staffing and the processing of license applications and renewals.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2026-2027 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.