

# 38A:13-10

## LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

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**LAWS OF:** 2011           **CHAPTER:** 116

**NJSA:** 38A:13-10 (Establishes "Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program" telephone helpline)

**BILL NO:** S1731 (Substituted for A2616)

**SPONSOR(S)** Madden and others

**DATE INTRODUCED:** March 4, 2010

**COMMITTEE:**           **ASSEMBLY:** Military and Veterans' Affairs

**SENATE:** Military and Veterans' Affairs  
Budget and Appropriations

**AMENDED DURING PASSAGE:** Yes

**DATE OF PASSAGE:**           **ASSEMBLY:** June 29, 2011

**SENATE:** June 29, 2011

**DATE OF APPROVAL:** August 19, 2011

**FOLLOWING ARE ATTACHED IF AVAILABLE:**

**FINAL TEXT OF BILL** (Second reprint enacted)

**S1731**

<b>SPONSOR'S STATEMENT:</b> (Begins on page 3 of introduced bill)	Yes	
<b>COMMITTEE STATEMENT:</b>	<b>ASSEMBLY:</b>	Yes
	<b>SENATE:</b>	Yes   Military Budget

(Audio archived recordings of the committee meetings, corresponding to the date of the committee statement, *may possibly* be found at [www.njleg.state.nj.us](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us))

**FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:** Yes

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:** No

**A2616**

<b>SPONSOR'S STATEMENT:</b> (Begins on page 3 of introduced bill)	Yes	
<b>COMMITTEE STATEMENT:</b>	<b>ASSEMBLY:</b>	Yes
	<b>SENATE:</b>	No
<b>FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT:</b>	Yes	
<b>LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:</b>	No	

(continued)

**VETO MESSAGE:** No

**GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:** Yes

**FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:**

To check for circulating copies, contact New Jersey State Government Publications at the State Library (609) 278-2640 ext.103 or <mailto:refdesk@njstatelib.org>

**REPORTS:** No

**HEARINGS:** No

**NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:** Yes

"Vet2Vet program given permanent funding under new N.J. law," Gloucester County Times, 8-20-11

"State to assist those who serve," Daily Record, 8-20-11

"Christie OKs bill in support of Guard," Courier-Post, 8-20-11

"Law lets N.J. residents aid guardsmen," Home News Tribune, 8-20-11

"State to assist those who serve," Asbury Park Press, 8-20-11

"Christie signs bill supporting services for Guardsmen," The Times, 8-20-11

"Christie signs two laws in support of N.J. National Guard," The Press, 8-20-11

"Lawmaker to lead veterans affairs unit," Courier-Post, 8-20-11

"Holt tries to prevent vet suicide," The Trentonian, 8-20-11

LAW/RWH

§§1-4 -  
C.38A:13-10 to  
38A:13-13  
§5 - Approp.  
§6 - Note

P.L.2011, CHAPTER 116, *approved August 19, 2011*  
Senate, No. 1731 (*Second Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning a veteran peer support telephone helpline, and  
2 supplementing chapter 13 of Title 38A of the New Jersey  
3 Statutes.

4  
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
6 of New Jersey:

7  
8 1. a. The Legislature finds and declares that the Department of  
9 Military and Veterans Affairs, in conjunction with the University of  
10 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has established a veteran to  
11 veteran peer support program telephone helpline. The helpline  
12 receives and responds to calls from veterans, servicemembers, and  
13 their families. It provides them with access to a comprehensive  
14 mental health provider network of mental health professionals  
15 specializing in post traumatic stress disorder and other veterans  
16 issues. All services are free and confidential.

17 b. Since its inception, the helpline has fielded over 6,000 calls  
18 from veterans and their families and based on prior statistics, a 10%  
19 increase in calls has been projected.

20 c. The helpline is funded through an allocation from a State  
21 appropriation for post traumatic stress disorder. It is appropriate  
22 that the helpline have a separate annual appropriation.

23  
24 2. a. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs shall  
25 establish, in coordination with University Behavioral HealthCare of  
26 the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, a toll free  
27 veteran to veteran peer support helpline.

28 b. The helpline shall be accessible 24 hours a day seven days  
29 per week and shall respond to calls from veterans, servicemembers  
30 and their families. The operators of the helpline shall seek to  
31 identify the veterans, servicemembers and their families who should  
32 be referred to further peer support and counseling services, and  
33 provide referrals.

34 c. The operators of the helpline shall be trained by University  
35 Behavioral Healthcare of the University of Medicine and Dentistry  
36 of New Jersey and, to the greatest extent possible, shall be trained

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly AMV committee amendments adopted February 10, 2011.

<sup>2</sup>Assembly floor amendments adopted June 23, 2011.

1 veterans or mental health professionals with military service  
2 expertise and (1) familiar with post traumatic stress disorder,  
3 <sup>2</sup>**[total]** traumatic<sup>2</sup> brain injury and the emotional and  
4 psychological tensions, depressions, and anxieties unique to  
5 veterans, servicemembers, and their families or (2) trained to  
6 provide counseling services involving marriage and family life,  
7 substance abuse, personal stress management and other emotional  
8 or psychological disorders or conditions which may be likely to  
9 adversely affect the personal and service related well-being of  
10 veterans, servicemembers, and their families.

11 d. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the  
12 University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey shall provide  
13 for the confidentiality of the names of the persons calling, the  
14 information discussed, and any referrals for further peer support or  
15 counseling; provided, however, the Department of Military and  
16 Veterans Affairs and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of  
17 New Jersey may establish guidelines providing for the tracking of  
18 any person who exhibits a severe emotional or psychological  
19 disorder or condition which the operator handling the call  
20 reasonably believes might result in harm to the veteran or  
21 servicemember or any other person.

22  
23 3. University Behavioral Healthcare of the University of  
24 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey shall maintain a list of  
25 credentialed military-oriented behavioral healthcare providers  
26 throughout the State of New Jersey. Case management services  
27 shall also be provided to ensure that veterans, servicemembers, and  
28 their families receive ongoing counseling throughout all pre and  
29 post deployment events in New Jersey. The continuum of services  
30 shall utilize the National Yellow Ribbon guidelines while providing  
31 ongoing peer support customized for each branch of military  
32 service.

33  
34 4. In establishing the helpline authorized under the provisions  
35 of section 2 of this act, P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the  
36 Legislature as this bill) the Adjutant General of the Department of  
37 Military and Veterans Affairs and University Behavioral Healthcare  
38 of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey shall  
39 consult on a quarterly basis with the New Jersey Division of Mental  
40 Health Services within the Department of Human Services, the  
41 United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the New Jersey  
42 Veterans Healthcare Network, at least two New Jersey Veteran  
43 Centers, and at least two State recognized veteran groups.

44  
45 5. There shall be appropriated annually from the General Fund  
46 to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs <sup>1</sup>**[the sum of**  
47 **\$350,000 to effectuate the purposes of this act]** a sum sufficient for  
48 the <sup>2</sup>**[maintenance]** operation<sup>2</sup> of the program<sup>1</sup>.

**S1731 [2R]**

3

1       6. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month  
2 following enactment, but the Department of Military and Veterans  
3 Affairs and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey  
4 may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance thereof  
5 as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

6

7

8

9

10       Establishes “Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program”  
11 telephone helpline.

[Corrected Copy]

**SENATE, No. 1731**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**214th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED MARCH 4, 2010

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator FRED H. MADDEN, JR.**

**District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**Senator JAMES BEACH**

**District 6 (Camden)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senators Buono, Greenstein, Norcross, Ruiz, Stack and Whelan**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes “Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program” telephone helpline.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/14/2010)**

S1731 MADDEN, BEACH

2

1 AN ACT concerning a veteran peer support telephone helpline, and  
2 supplementing chapter 13 of Title 38A of the New Jersey  
3 Statutes.

4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6 *of New Jersey:*

7

8 1. a. The Legislature finds and declares that the Department of  
9 Military and Veterans Affairs, in conjunction with the University of  
10 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has established a veteran to  
11 veteran peer support program telephone helpline. The helpline  
12 receives and responds to calls from veterans, servicemembers, and  
13 their families. It provides them with access to a comprehensive  
14 mental health provider network of mental health professionals  
15 specializing in post traumatic stress disorder and other veterans  
16 issues. All services are free and confidential.

17 b. Since its inception, the helpline has fielded over 6,000 calls  
18 from veterans and their families and based on prior statistics, a 10%  
19 increase in calls has been projected.

20 c. The helpline is funded through an allocation from a State  
21 appropriation for post traumatic stress disorder. It is appropriate  
22 that the helpline have a separate annual appropriation.

23

24 2. a. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs shall  
25 establish, in coordination with University Behavioral HealthCare of  
26 the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, a toll free  
27 veteran to veteran peer support helpline.

28 b. The helpline shall be accessible 24 hours a day seven days per  
29 week and shall respond to calls from veterans, servicemembers and  
30 their families. The operators of the helpline shall seek to identify  
31 the veterans, servicemembers and their families who should be  
32 referred to further peer support and counseling services, and  
33 provide referrals.

34 c. The operators of the helpline shall be trained by University  
35 Behavioral Healthcare of the University of Medicine and Dentistry  
36 of New Jersey and, to the greatest extent possible, shall be trained  
37 veterans or mental health professionals with military service  
38 expertise and (1) familiar with post traumatic stress disorder, total  
39 brain injury and the emotional and psychological tensions,  
40 depressions, and anxieties unique to veterans, servicemembers, and  
41 their families or (2) trained to provide counseling services involving  
42 marriage and family life, substance abuse, personal stress  
43 management and other emotional or psychological disorders or  
44 conditions which may be likely to adversely affect the personal and  
45 service related well-being of veterans, servicemembers, and their  
46 families.

47 d. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the  
48 University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey shall provide

S1731 MADDEN, BEACH

3

1 for the confidentiality of the names of the persons calling, the  
2 information discussed, and any referrals for further peer support or  
3 counseling; provided, however, the Department of Military and  
4 Veterans Affairs and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of  
5 New Jersey may establish guidelines providing for the tracking of  
6 any person who exhibits a severe emotional or psychological  
7 disorder or condition which the operator handling the call  
8 reasonably believes might result in harm to the veteran or  
9 servicemember or any other person.

10

11 3. University Behavioral Healthcare of the University of  
12 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey shall maintain a list of  
13 credentialed military-oriented behavioral healthcare providers  
14 throughout the State of New Jersey. Case management services  
15 shall also be provided to ensure that veterans, servicemembers, and  
16 their families receive ongoing counseling throughout all pre and  
17 post deployment events in New Jersey. The continuum of services  
18 shall utilize the National Yellow Ribbon guidelines while providing  
19 ongoing peer support customized for each branch of military  
20 service.

21

22 4. In establishing the helpline authorized under the provisions of  
23 section 2 of this act, P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the  
24 Legislature as this bill) the Adjutant General of the Department of  
25 Military and Veterans Affairs and University Behavioral Healthcare  
26 of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey shall  
27 consult on a quarterly basis with the New Jersey Division of Mental  
28 Health Services within the Department of Human Services, the  
29 United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the New Jersey  
30 Veterans Healthcare Network, at least two New Jersey Veteran  
31 Centers, and at least two State recognized veteran groups.

32

33 5. There shall be appropriated annually from the General Fund  
34 to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs the sum of  
35 \$350,000 to effectuate the purposes of this act.

36

37 6. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month  
38 following enactment, but the Department of Military and Veterans  
39 Affairs and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey  
40 may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance thereof  
41 as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

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STATEMENT

45

46 The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, in conjunction  
47 with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has  
48 established a veteran to veteran peer support program telephone



**S1731 MADDEN, BEACH**

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1 helpline. The helpline receives and responds to calls from veterans,  
2 servicemembers, and their families. It provides New Jersey  
3 veterans and their families with access to a comprehensive mental  
4 health provider network of mental health professionals specializing  
5 in post traumatic stress disorder and other veterans issues. All  
6 services are free and confidential. Since its inception, the helpline  
7 has fielded over 6,000. This bill will establish the helpline in  
8 statute. The bill requires an annual appropriation.

SENATE MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

**SENATE, No. 1731**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MARCH 15, 2010

The Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Senate, No. 1731.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, in conjunction with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has established a veteran to veteran peer support program telephone helpline. The helpline receives and responds to calls from veterans, servicemembers, and their families. It provides New Jersey veterans and their families with access to a comprehensive mental health provider network of mental health professionals specializing in post traumatic stress disorder and other veterans issues. All services are free and confidential. Since its inception, the helpline has fielded over 6,000 calls. This bill will establish the helpline in statute. The bill requires an annual appropriation.

# SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### SENATE, No. 1731

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 6, 2010

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1731.

This bill codifies in statute a “Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program” telephone helpline established by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, in conjunction with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

The helpline receives and responds to calls from veterans, servicemembers, and their families. It provides New Jersey veterans and their families with access to a comprehensive mental health provider network of mental health professionals specializing in post traumatic stress disorder and other veterans issues. All services are free and confidential. Since its inception, the helpline has fielded over 6,000 calls. This bill requires an annual appropriation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This bill is not certified for a fiscal note.

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[Corrected Copy]  
**SENATE, No. 1731**

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: FEBRUARY 10, 2011

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate, No. 1731.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, in conjunction with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has established a veteran to veteran peer support program telephone helpline. The helpline receives and responds to calls from veterans, servicemembers, and their families. It provides New Jersey veterans and their families with access to a comprehensive mental health provider network of mental health professionals specializing in post traumatic stress disorder and other veterans' issues. All services are free and confidential. This bill will establish the helpline in statute. The bill requires the State to make, in the future, an appropriation each year for the operation of the program.

In the current State appropriations act, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs receives monies to fund the support services for returning veterans program and a portion of that money is currently allocated to fund the helpline program. Since its inception, the helpline has fielded over 6,000 calls and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs believes it to be important. The requirement in the bill for future appropriations would help ensure the ongoing operation of the helpline program. No additional appropriation is expected currently because any necessary additional funds would be transferred from the support services for returning veterans program.

This bill, as amended, is identical to Assembly, No. 2616 (1R) of 2010-2011.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amended the bill to adjust the language that requires the appropriation of funds in the future by the State. The language originally required a specific amount of money to be appropriated. The amendment will allow for flexibility in the

appropriation by calling for an appropriation of a sum sufficient to operate the program.

STATEMENT TO  
[First Reprint]  
**SENATE, No. 1731**

with Assembly Floor Amendments  
(Proposed by Assemblyman CONNERS)

ADOPTED: JUNE 23, 2011

This amendment replaces a reference to “total” brain injury with “traumatic” brain injury in the part of the bill that describes the knowledge helpline operators should have. An additional amendment is also made to make the provision in section 5 of this bill identical to the one in Assembly, No. 2616 (1R).

# ASSEMBLY, No. 2616

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 214th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 6, 2010

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman JACK CONNERS**

**District 7 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Assemblywoman CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER**

**District 28 (Essex)**

**Assemblyman PAUL D. MORIARTY**

**District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes “Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program” telephone helpline; makes appropriation.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/7/2010)

1 AN ACT concerning a veteran peer support telephone helpline, and  
2 supplementing chapter 13 of Title 38A of the New Jersey  
3 Statutes and making an appropriation.

4  
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6 *of New Jersey:*

7  
8 1. a. The Legislature finds and declares that the Department of  
9 Military and Veterans Affairs, in conjunction with the University of  
10 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has established a veteran to  
11 veteran peer support program telephone helpline. The helpline  
12 receives and responds to calls from veterans, servicemembers, and  
13 their families. It provides them with access to a comprehensive  
14 mental health provider network of mental health professionals  
15 specializing in post traumatic stress disorder and other veterans  
16 issues. All services are free and confidential.

17 b. Since its inception, the helpline has fielded over 6,000 calls  
18 from veterans and their families and based on prior statistics, a 10%  
19 increase in calls has been projected.

20 c. The helpline is funded through an allocation from a State  
21 appropriation for post traumatic stress disorder. It is appropriate  
22 that the helpline have a separate annual appropriation.

23  
24 2. a. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs shall  
25 establish, in coordination with University Behavioral HealthCare of  
26 the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, a toll free  
27 veteran to veteran peer support helpline.

28 b. The helpline shall be accessible 24 hours a day seven days per  
29 week and shall respond to calls from veterans, servicemembers and  
30 their families. The operators of the helpline shall seek to identify  
31 the veterans, servicemembers and their families who should be  
32 referred to further peer support and counseling services, and  
33 provide referrals.

34 c. The operators of the helpline shall be trained by University  
35 Behavioral Healthcare of the University of Medicine and Dentistry  
36 of New Jersey and, to the greatest extent possible, shall be trained  
37 veterans or mental health professionals with military service  
38 expertise and (1) familiar with post traumatic stress disorder, total  
39 brain injury and the emotional and psychological tensions,  
40 depressions, and anxieties unique to veterans, servicemembers, and  
41 their families or (2) trained to provide counseling services involving  
42 marriage and family life, substance abuse, personal stress  
43 management and other emotional or psychological disorders or  
44 conditions which may be likely to adversely affect the personal and  
45 service related well-being of veterans, servicemembers, and their  
46 families.

47 d. The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the  
48 University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey shall provide



1 for the confidentiality of the names of the persons calling, the  
2 information discussed, and any referrals for further peer support or  
3 counseling; provided, however, the Department of Military and  
4 Veterans Affairs and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of  
5 New Jersey may establish guidelines providing for the tracking of  
6 any person who exhibits a severe emotional or psychological  
7 disorder or condition which the operator handling the call  
8 reasonably believes might result in harm to the veteran or  
9 servicemember or any other person.

10

11 3. University Behavioral Healthcare of the University of  
12 Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey shall maintain a list of  
13 credentialed military-oriented behavioral healthcare providers  
14 throughout the State of New Jersey. Case management services  
15 shall also be provided to ensure that veterans, servicemembers, and  
16 their families receive ongoing counseling throughout all pre and  
17 post deployment events in New Jersey. The continuum of services  
18 shall utilize the National Yellow Ribbon guidelines while providing  
19 ongoing peer support customized for each branch of military  
20 service.

21

22 4. In establishing the helpline authorized under the provisions of  
23 section 2 of this act, P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the  
24 Legislature as this bill) the Adjutant General of the Department of  
25 Military and Veterans Affairs and University Behavioral Healthcare  
26 of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey shall  
27 consult on a quarterly basis with the New Jersey Division of Mental  
28 Health Services within the Department of Human Services, the  
29 United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the New Jersey  
30 Veterans Healthcare Network, at least two New Jersey Veteran  
31 Centers, and at least two State recognized veteran groups.

32

33 5. There shall be appropriated annually from the General Fund  
34 to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs the sum of  
35 \$350,000 to effectuate the purposes of this act.

36

37 6. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fourth month  
38 following enactment, but the Department of Military and Veterans  
39 Affairs and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey  
40 may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance thereof  
41 as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

42

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44

#### STATEMENT

45

46 The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, in conjunction  
47 with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has  
48 established a veteran to veteran peer support program telephone

**A2616 CONNERS, TUCKER**

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1 helpline. The helpline receives and responds to calls from veterans,  
2 servicemembers, and their families. It provides New Jersey  
3 veterans and their families with access to a comprehensive mental  
4 health provider network of mental health professionals specializing  
5 in post traumatic stress disorder and other veterans issues. All  
6 services are free and confidential. Since its inception, the helpline  
7 has fielded over 6,000 calls. This bill will establish the helpline in  
8 statute. The bill requires an annual appropriation.

ASSEMBLY MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO  
ASSEMBLY, No. 2616

with committee amendments

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: FEBRUARY 10, 2011

The Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly, No. 2616.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, in conjunction with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has established a veteran to veteran peer support program telephone helpline. The helpline receives and responds to calls from veterans, servicemembers, and their families. It provides New Jersey veterans and their families with access to a comprehensive mental health provider network of mental health professionals specializing in post traumatic stress disorder and other veterans' issues. All services are free and confidential. This bill will establish the helpline in statute. The bill requires the State to make, in the future, an appropriation each year for the operation of the program.

In the current State appropriations act, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs receives monies to fund the support services for returning veterans program and a portion of that money is currently allocated to fund the helpline program. Since its inception, the helpline has fielded over 6,000 calls and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs believes it to be important. The requirement in the bill for future appropriations would help ensure the ongoing operation of the helpline program. No additional appropriation is expected currently because any necessary additional funds would be transferred from the support services for returning veterans program.

This bill, as amended, is identical to Senate, No. 1731 CC (1R) of 2010-2011.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amended the bill to adjust the language that requires the appropriation of funds in the future by the State. The language originally required a specific amount of money to be appropriated. The amendment will allow for flexibility in the appropriation by calling for an appropriation of a sum sufficient to operate the program.

The committee adopted technical amendments to the bill to delete references in the title and synopsis to “making” an appropriation because the bill does not make a new appropriation.

STATEMENT TO  
[First Reprint]  
**ASSEMBLY, No. 2616**

with Assembly Floor Amendments  
(Proposed by Assemblyman CONNERS)

ADOPTED: JUNE 23, 2011

This amendment replaces a reference to “total” brain injury with “traumatic” brain injury in the part of the bill that describes the knowledge helpline operators should have.

## Governor Christie Signs Legislation Creating New Programs to Assist New Jersey's Military Veterans and Citizen Soldiers

Friday, August 19, 2011    Tags: [Bill Action](#)

**Trenton, NJ** – Reinforcing his commitment to New Jersey's veterans, National Guard members and their families, Governor Chris Christie today signed legislation that creates and enhances assistance tools that provide financial support and peer counseling services through the New Jersey National Guard State Family Readiness Council Fund and the Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program telephone helpline.

"Every day, the brave men and women of the New Jersey National Guard put their personal lives on hold, leaving not only their loved ones, but their jobs behind, to defend our nation and American values," said Governor Christie. "These difficult times are made even more stressful when a family's key source of income is lost due to deployment. Today, I am proud to sign legislation establishing the New Jersey National Guard State Family Readiness Council Fund.

"I'm equally pleased to sign S-1731, establishing the Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program telephone helpline. Serving in a combat zone puts overwhelming stress on the mind and body that the average New Jerseyan will never know. So, this program is a critical component of the healing process in the long-term mental health of our service members who return from Iraq and Afghanistan as well as veterans of previous conflicts. I believe it is only fitting that we take every opportunity to recognize the sacrifice of these service members and their families and provide whatever assistance we can as a token of our gratitude and appreciation for their service to our state and our country," added Governor Christie.

Through the New Jersey National Guard State Family Readiness Council Fund, Garden State residents now will be able to help National Guard members and their families during difficult times by voluntarily contributing to the fund by checking a box on their yearly income tax forms. As a result of A-2286, National Guard members and their families will get the support they need, especially when a wage earner has temporarily left civilian employment to be placed on active military duty.

Funds donated by the public will be collected through the state Division of Taxation and then distributed by the New Jersey National Guard Family Readiness Council, a non-profit organization whose main goal is to assist and support the families of deployed New Jersey National Guard members. Founded in 2004, the Council provides education, counseling, financial planning and other support services. In January 2010, the Readiness Council was one of the three organizations recognized by Governor Christie and First Lady Mary Pat Christie for their work and received a \$141,000 donation from contributions generated through the Governor's Inaugural.

Through S-1731, an annual appropriation will be designated for the Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program telephone helpline. The New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA), in conjunction with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, currently operate a 24-hour toll free peer support telephone helpline that provides access to a comprehensive mental health provider network of mental health professionals specializing in post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and other emotional and psychological disorders. The peer counselors are trained in other veterans' issues that range from marriage and family life to substance abuse and stress management. All services are free, confidential and available seven days a week. Additional information can be found at <http://www.njveteranshelpline.org/>.

"Over the past decade, the New Jersey National Guard has deployed more than 15,000 service members around the globe safeguarding our state and nation," said Major General Glenn K. Rieth, the Adjutant General of New Jersey who oversees the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and serves as commander of the New Jersey National Guard. "These bills reaffirm the Governor's commitment to our veterans and our New Jersey National Guard members and their families who sacrifice so much for our freedom."

In addition to supporting all of the vital programs provided by DMAVA, Governor Christie has signed legislation that strengthens the support network for military families after the death of a service member, as well as a program that awards high school diplomas to veterans who dropped out to serve in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. In January, he signed legislation for the Gold Star Families license plate to honor the families of members of the military killed in action for their sacrifice.

"New Jersey's servicemen and women have made tireless sacrifices for our state and country," said Neil Van Ess, State Commander of the New Jersey Military Order of the Purple Heart. "Thanks to Governor Christie's support, our military veterans and their families will continue to have unlimited access to mental health services and peer counselors as they need it. In addition, National Guard members and their families can rest a little easier knowing they

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have a source of assistance to get through the difficult times associated with deployments.”

Sponsors of A-2286 include Assemblymembers Gordon M. Johnson (D-Bergen), Craig J. Coughlin (D-Middlesex) and Jack Conners (D-Burlington, Camden).

Sponsors of S-1731 include Senators Fred H. Madden, Jr. (D-Camden, Gloucester) and James Beach (D-Camden) and Assemblymembers Jack Conners (D-Burlington, Camden), Cleopatra G. Tucker (D-Essex), and Paul D. Moriarty (D-Camden, Gloucester).

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