



State of New Jersey

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James T. Plousis, Chairman Budget Testimony, FY 15

Assembly Budget Committee April 7, 2014

The New Jersey State Parole Board remains dedicated to public safety, while at the same time administering an effective parole system tracking and managing 15,283 offenders, including over 6,000 sex offenders. With responsible parole decision making and the reintegration of offenders into society by utilizing evidence based practices, the State Parole Board strives to sustain reductions in recidivism. In addition, partnerships with local, state and federal law enforcement as well as community-based organizations has served to promote successful offender reentry into the community.

The New Jersey State Parole Board is appreciative of the review performed by the Office of Legislative Services Audit Team, the respective recommendations offered by the Audit Team and the opportunity afforded to the State Parole Board to provide comments to the report. We are confident that the corrective measures implemented by the State Parole Board effectively address the concerns identified by the Audit Team.

As a result of the efforts of the State Parole Board to improve the agency's operational effectiveness, recruitment and training, the State Parole Board was awarded accreditation by the New Jersey Association of Chiefs of Police. This prestigious professional achievement acknowledges the implementation of policies and procedures that are conceptually sound, operationally effective and consistent with nationally recognized best practices.

The State Parole Board continues to expand the Veterans Reentry Initiative, which recognizes veterans who have served our country and have become involved in the criminal justice system. Training presentations to the United States Attorney's Office, the New Jersey State Warden's Association, the Gloucester County Police Chiefs Association and the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services; and participation in the Attorney General's Veteran's Civil Rights Seminars in Atlantic City and Camden County resulted in a pilot project to assist veterans arrested by Gloucester County law enforcement. The goal of the pilot project is to provide veteran offenders with services and support, thereby reducing the recidivism of the veteran offender population.

The State Parole Board also partnered with the American Legion, the United States Chamber of Commerce and the NBC television network in national "Hiring our Heroes" employment workshop fairs throughout the State. With a focus on housing opportunities, the

State Parole Board sponsored "Housing our Heroes" forums, the goal of which was to coordinate services provided by federal, state, county, non-profit and service providers for veteran offenders. The State Parole Board Veteran Reentry Initiative continues to operate the state-wide hotline for veteran offenders and looks forward to further assisting veteran offenders with mental health, substance abuse, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injuries.

The State Parole Board was one of eight recipients throughout the United States that received the "Second Chance Act Adult Offender Reentry Program for Planning and Demonstration Projects" grant from the United States, Bureau of Justice Assistance. This grant will support a reentry program that provides evidence-based services targeting medium to high risk offenders.

As of June 30, 2013, the Parolee Employment Placement Program (PEPP), a partnership developed by the State Parole Board with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, has met or exceeded all established benchmarks in terms of successfully obtaining employment and remaining employed for 30, 60 and 90 day time periods. Given this demonstrated success, the State Parole Board seeks to expand the program into additional counties with the Notice of Grant Opportunity by New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Continuing with our commitment to ensuring public safety, the State Parole Board participated in the design and implementation of the fifth Attorney General's New Jersey Fugitive Safe Surrender Program in Jersey City in November, 2013. Over 4,500 individuals turned themselves in safely over the four day program and represents the most successful program to date in New Jersey and the third highest turnout nation-wide of the 26 Fugitive Safe Surrender events held since 2005.

In closing, the New Jersey State Parole Board will continue to seek federal and state grant opportunities, collaborate with partnering law enforcement and state agencies, and maximize technologies in its implementation of evidence based best practices in the field of community supervision. These innovative efforts further promote public safety and improve the quality of all programs and services that help to foster positive changes and aid in the reintegration of offenders back into the community as law-abiding citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I welcome any questions.