

ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2469

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 8, 2010

The Assembly Judiciary Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2469.

As amended, this bill would establish a six-member panel known as the “Blue Ribbon Panel to Review New Jersey’s Inmate Policy.” The panel would consist of former judges, prosecutors, or public defenders as appointed by the Governor.

The committee amendments modify the name of the panel. The bill as introduced had provided that the name was the “Blue Ribbon Panel to Review New Jersey’s Inmate Population.”

The panel is charged with comprehensively reviewing and analyzing data on the characteristics of the inmate population in this State’s correctional facilities. As amended, the bill provides that these characteristics shall include but not be limited to age, infirmity, ethnicity, gender, health treatment and mental health treatment received, offense committed, race, participation in educational and vocational programs, term of incarceration, and any other characteristic identified by the panel. The panel is authorized to obtain the data from various sources, such as the Department of Corrections, the State Parole Board, or other State department, or from any other governmental or nongovernmental entity.

The panel is required to report to the Legislature and the Governor within two years of the date of appointment of its members any legislative or other recommendations concerning correctional policy based on the review and analysis of the inmate population data. The panel is to expire after it issues its report.

This bill would repeal section 11 of P.L.2009, c.329, which created a “Blue Ribbon Panel for Review of Long-Term Prisoners’ Parole Eligibility” in the State Parole Board. That panel was charged with considering if prisoners who had been incarcerated and served more than 20 years of their sentences should be eligible for parole, and with submitting any recommendations for parole to the appropriate parole board panel.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

1. Change the name of the panel from the “Blue Ribbon Panel to Review New Jersey’s Inmate Population” to the “Blue Ribbon Panel to Review New Jersey’s Inmate Policy.”

2. Provide that in addition to reviewing data on the characteristics of the inmate population as listed in the bill, the panel would also review data concerning inmates’ infirmity and mental health treatment received.