

# SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### SENATE, No. 1511

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 27, 2010

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 1511.

This bill requires the Commissioner of Corrections to ensure that any unit responsible for investigating acts of wrongdoing by employees of the Department of Corrections (DOC), including any internal affairs unit, is separate and apart from any unit responsible for collecting information on gangs and their operation within this State's correctional facilities.

The commissioner is the administrator and chief executive officer of the DOC. As such, he is responsible for organizing the work of the department into divisions, bureaus and other organizational units. Currently, a unit in the department known as the Special Investigations Division (SID) is charged with investigating all acts of wrongdoing inside State correctional facilities, including acts of wrongdoing by corrections officers.

In addition to this internal affairs section, SID also has a section devoted to gathering information about gangs and gang members inside these facilities. A primary source of this information on gang activity is the corrections officers who interact with the inmates on a daily basis. According to the sponsor's statement, the fact that SID is responsible for conducting internal investigations of corrections officers creates tension between the SID investigators and corrections officers. This tension impedes the collection of gang information by SID.

Additionally, the sponsor's statement indicates that the purpose of this bill is to improve the lines of communication between the investigators who collect gang information and the corrections officers by separating the internal affairs function from the gang intelligence function.