

SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1484

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 7, 1996

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1484.

This bill would expand the number of youthful offenders who would be eligible for participation in the "Stabilization and Reintegration Program" (SRP) established by P.L.1995, c.330.

Under that statute, the Department of Corrections may assign certain offenders between the ages of 18 and 26 to the "SRP," which consists of both a highly structured residential program of physical exercise, work, education and psychological counseling, and an intensive follow-up program of "after-care" involving work opportunities and vocational training. This bill, as amended and released by the committee, permits the department to assign offenders up to age 30 to the program.

Currently, only certain youthful offenders who have been convicted of third or fourth degree crimes are eligible to participate in the "SRP" program. The statute prohibits the participation of all offenders convicted of crimes of the first and second degree (except for those second degree offenders sentenced as third degree offenders pursuant to N.J.S.2C:44-1), all persons convicted of sexual assault and criminal sexual contact, and all persons convicted of crimes requiring the imposition of mandatory terms of imprisonment.

Under this bill, eligibility for the program would be broadened to include more persons convicted of second, third and fourth degree crimes, including those crimes involving the imposition of mandatory terms of imprisonment if the offender has no more than one year remaining in the mandatory portion of his sentence. However, only those second degree offenders who were convicted of non-violent crimes are eligible to participate.

This bill, like current law, would still bar all sex offenders from participating in the program.

The committee amendment increases the maximum age for the program from 26 to 30 years old.