

FISCAL NOTE TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2204

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JULY 16, 1997

Senate Bill No. 2204 (1R) of 1997 implements three recommendations of the Governor's Study Commission on Parole by amending three sections of the "Parole Act of 1979" (P.L.1979, c.441; C.30:4-123.45 et seq.).

The bill requires the preparation of a risk assessment evaluation for inmates eligible for consideration for parole. It permits parole board panels to require an inmate to undergo in-depth preparole psychological evaluations as often as the panels deems necessary, to provide the panel with current and accurate information to assess an inmate's suitability for parole. These evaluations are to be included in the inmate's preparole report. The bill also requires all psychological reports prepared in connection with any court proceeding to be included in the preparole report required under current law. These reports would supplement any psychological evaluations otherwise required by the board and assist the Parole Board in determining when parole of an inmate is not appropriate.

The Department of Corrections states that the bill would initially impact the Parole Board, and it is anticipated that it would eventually result in an increase in the imposition of special conditions for parole, primarily psychological treatment services. This would impact the Bureau of Parole's responsibility to monitor these special conditions. According to the department, pre-parole psychological evaluations are currently being performed by licensed psychologists under contract with Correctional Medical Services (CMS), the department's contract medical provider, at all of the institutions. Community-based psychological services are provided for parolees on a limited basis. However, it is assumed that with the increase in special conditions for parole, the need for these services will increase significantly in volume and frequency.

The department states that the proposed changes would increase the workload of the Parole Board, the Bureau of Parole, and the medical services staff within the Department of Corrections. However, because there is no information available concerning the potential volume and type of psychological services that would be required, the department is unable to estimate the cost of this bill

The Office of Legislative Services concurs.

This fiscal note has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.