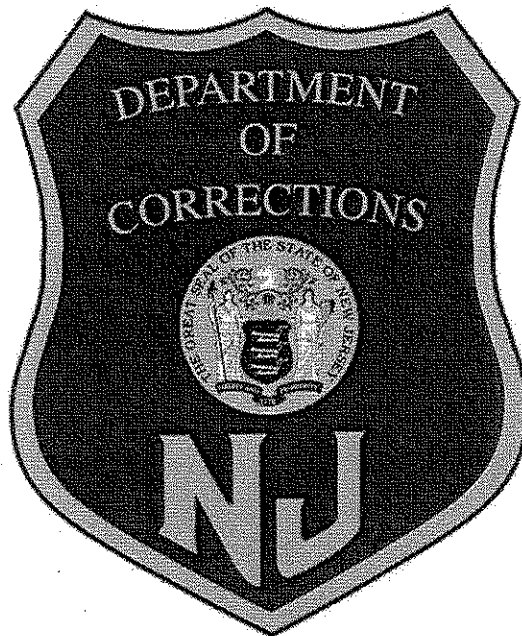


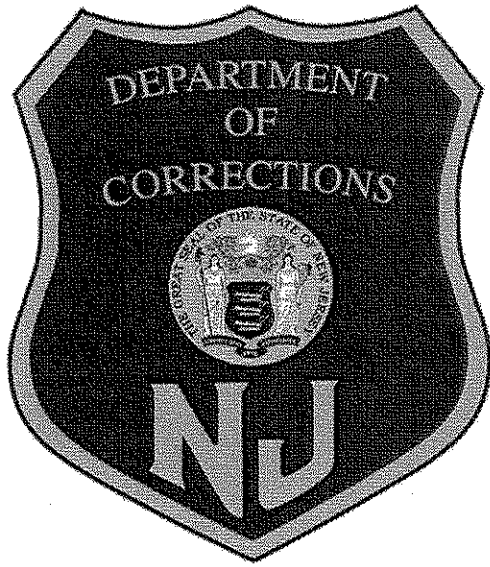
***George W. Hayman
Commissioner
Department of Corrections***

Assembly Budget Committee

Senate Budget and Appropriation Committee



Submitted March 22, 2007



State of New Jersey
Department of Corrections

Commissioner's Testimony

ASSEMBLY BUDGET COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
TESTIMONY
OF
COMMISSIONER GEORGE W. HAYMAN
March 22, 2007

As with all agencies in the state, the New Jersey Department of Corrections must walk a budgetary tightrope. However, as the largest law enforcement body in the state, we must balance public safety with fiscal restraint in difficult budgetary circumstances. The department's budget has, of necessity, grown in direct proportion to the number of inmates who have been placed in our care and custody.

Yet, despite that fact, the department has been able to identify more than \$2.4 million in budget reductions for FY 2008 through program eliminations and administrative efficiencies.

We expect to participate in the process of identifying management efficiencies again, contributing toward the statewide reduction in the fiscal year 2008 budget, and will continue our efforts to sustain a substantial reduction in custody overtime.

Through rigorous monitoring, a post-by-post review and contract negotiations, the department has continued to reduce custody overtime from \$83.6 million in fiscal year 1998, to an anticipated \$54.2 million in fiscal year 2007. As you are aware, this includes an additional \$10.9 million in our current year appropriation to cover costs associated with shift overlap due to reinstatement of system-wide lineups. This has been a welcomed enhancement to institutional and staff safety and security, and we appreciate the support from you, our Legislators, in this regard.

In addition to the reductions mentioned earlier, consideration was given to the elimination of \$1.6 million supporting 23 unreimbursed inmate work details that provide services to communities and state parks, as well as highway cleanup. This reduction was rejected since it would have resulted in increased costs to the current recipients of the services. Consideration was also given to reducing county back-up of state prisoners but this was also rejected. As you are aware, state correctional facilities are overcrowded beyond their design capacities. Forcing further overcrowding would cause increased security and safety risks for staff and inmates. It would also lead to higher straight-time and over-time costs since an increase in custody posts would be required.

Additionally, the department has aggressively and successfully pursued federal grants that augment the services offered to departing inmates. Indeed, the budget we propose allows us to fulfill our mission -- to ensure that those committed to the state correctional institutions are confined with the level of custody necessary to protect the public and that they are provided the care, training and treatment needed to prepare them for reintegration into the community.

And while an historic attrition rate of 12 uniformed staff per pay period, early retirement and the War in Iraq have cut deeply into our personnel ranks, our Bureau of Training continues to maintain a bold schedule to ensure full custody staffing. While maintaining a continual recruit training schedule to reduce the overtime expenditure by lowering statewide custody vacancies, the Bureau of Training identified and prioritized those areas

requiring immediate action. Two hundred sixty-three officers have graduated from the Correctional Staff Training Academy in Sea Girt during the past 12 months, assuring a full complement of uniformed staff throughout the year.

Over the past year, the Correctional Staff Training Academy has instituted a Supervisory Training Program for new and upcoming supervisors, having taken a pro-active approach by training Sergeants who in the near future will be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, in a three-day supervisory training program concentrating on leadership skills and upper management level tasks. In addition, a similar program is offered to our officers who will soon be promoted to the rank of Sergeant, an intensive five-day training focusing on leadership styles, conflict resolutions, and the critical shift that they may encounter as new supervisors.

GANGS

Once the sole province of the urban landscape, gangs—and the crime and violence attendant with them—have made their way into every county in the state, in suburban and rural areas as well. Hence, Governor Corzine has made gang recognition, apprehension and elimination a priority of his administration. More than 15 years ago, the department began tracking the Security Threat Groups in our prisons, which has led to a database that is routinely shared with federal, state, county and local police. When it became apparent that such a large number of inmates were identified definitively as gang members, the department, in 1998, designed a special unit to house the gang leaders apart from the general population.

To that end, the Security Threat Group Management Unit (STGMU), located at Northern State Prison in Newark, was devised to isolate problematic gang-affiliated inmates or those

identified as gang leaders from the general prison population. At the same time, STGMU provides a structured and controlled environment where inmate behavior is closely monitored by a team of departmental staff. The results of the STGMU program were immediate -- a department-wide drop of 42 percent in staff assaults and an 84 percent drop in organized violent behavior among our inmates.

Recently, the department has been considering expansion of the STGMU program to respond to an increase in the number of gang members identified as actively involved in gang participation. These findings are a result of increased searches conducted throughout our facilities and other refinements in our investigatory efforts.

INMATE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING,
TRANSITIONAL SERVICES AND RE-ENTRY

Realizing the correlation between recidivism and public safety, Governor Corzine has continued to give re-entry efforts for the thousands of inmates in our care the full attention of his administration. More than 14,000 offenders are released from state prisons in New Jersey each year, and over the next five years, an estimated 70,000 offenders will leave state prisons and return to their communities. More than half of released offenders will be rearrested for a new crime within nine months, and many will return to prison within three years. The costs associated with high recidivism rates range from the incalculable cost to communities, families and victims affected by crime, to ballooning budgets needed for the incarceration of offenders. It therefore becomes incumbent on the department to address this

pressing public safety problem while inmates are in our care, and we begin that process even as they enter prison.

The Department of Corrections ensures that all offenders are given an initial risk/needs assessment, are reviewed on an ongoing basis, and leave custody with a discharge plan. All newly-admitted offenders are formally assessed on intake to determine their risk to re-offend and their need for rehabilitative programming. Prior to release, offenders are re-assessed to measure treatment progress and to recommend post-release services.

The department has standardized social services rehabilitative programming. The programs selected were developed according to national best practice methodology for reducing recidivism and correspond to the risks/needs assessment. They address cognitive behavioral change, anger management, responsible

parenting and re-entry preparation. Offenders leaving custody receive an individualized discharge plan that assists them in addressing reentry issues relating to: personal identification, housing, voter registration, transportation, employment, education, family and social supports, spiritual, mental and physical health, and substance use.

The budget recommends a new initiative to further strengthen offender re-entry. One million dollars has been added to support the S.T.A.R.S., (Successful Transition and Re-entry Series) program. This 12-week re-entry preparatory course, recently piloted at four of our institutions, provides offenders nearing their release a structured and detailed approach to addressing each major re-entry barrier that ex-offenders face when returning to community life. While developing S.T.A.R.S., the department extensively researched re-entry programs throughout

the fifty states and Canada, focusing specifically on programs endorsed by the National Institute of Corrections, American Correctional Association and other nationally recognized criminal justice organizations. Department staff have used this research to develop a practical, cost-effective curriculum customized to address the specific re-entry needs of New Jersey's offender population. This major enhancement to the department's re-entry and discharge planning effort will allow for up to 3,000 participants. An additional sixteen social work staff will deliver these enhanced services system wide.

However, even before discharge, the department is committed to an ambitious effort to educate the offenders within our facilities, and has made the passage of the GED a priority in our institutions. GED results for calendar year 2006 are as follows: 978 tests administered, 660 passed, representing a 67 percent pass rate, which speaks volumes about the department's fine

educators. In addition, 109 high school diplomas were awarded to our school age population. This educational mission drives an innovative curriculum rich with effective academic and vocational programs, as well as comprehensive computer technology programming, allowing the learner to be immersed in computer literacy while engaged in every facet of school programming. The Office of Educational Services provides a wide range of computer technology at every facility and continues to pursue new technologies and emerging trends, exposing the inmate learners to an extensive curriculum related to computer literacy.

Our mission in the 21st century is to provide our students with the educational experiences and skills needed to enter and remain current with the advanced technology influencing the current and future job market. Comprehensive academic,

vocational, computer and technology based skills are important elements in a successful transition into society and the workforce. The achievement of a broad educational base will allow for the retooling of skills and abilities to adjust to an ever-changing job market.

Post prison, several programs are in place for offenders residing at halfway houses to aid in their transition back to society, and especially their families. The Responsible Parenting Program is an interdepartmental initiative that seeks to encourage responsible parenting through the provision of specific services tailored to allow incarcerated parents to assume emotional and financial responsibility for their children. The primary goal of this initiative is to develop and improve relationships between children and incarcerated parents.

The Department of Labor is an emerging third partner in this initiative working closely with both the Departments of Corrections and Human Services to determine effective strategies to assist Responsible Parenting Program participants in obtaining better employment or training and educational services.

CONTRACTED SERVICES

The department's Office of Community Programs, maintains contracts with providers of Residential Community Release Programs at a cost of \$61 million annually. More recently, a halfway house program specializing in community re-entry for special needs inmates has been added. The contracts support a total of 2,744 beds and include new services for female inmates, while providing the department with an improved method for managing and tracking the performance of contracted services.

Medical, dental, mental health and substance abuse services are delivered by contracted service providers, specialists in their respective fields, at a combined cost of \$159 million. Under the monitoring and general management of the department, costs are contained, and the required services are delivered to an average daily population of more than 27,000 inmates and 350 civilly committed sex offenders throughout the year.

In addition, the department maintains contracts with the various county jails to house state prisoners awaiting transfer to state correctional facilities at an anticipated cost of \$52.8 million in fiscal year 2008. In total, department-wide contracted services exceed \$270 million for FY 2008.

OTHER BUDGETARY ISSUES

Relocation of Civilly Committed Residents

Sex offenders who have completed their terms for sex offenses but who are deemed too dangerous to be released, are civilly committed to our Sexually Violent Predator unit, with treatment services provided by the Department of Human Services. This population has recently been growing at the rate of 1-3 residents per month. The current facilities housing the civilly committed are now fully occupied. In order to provide more permanent housing for the medium term and beyond, the unit will be moved to another location within the State prison facility complex, where sufficient programmatic and housing space for this population can be fully secured and completely segregated from the state prisoner population. This solution represents an economical, internal shift in resident housing which will satisfy both the physical plant and treatment space requirements for

managing this difficult to place population. In order to effectuate this population shift, insure the availability of treatment programming at the receiving institution, and maintain segregation of civilly committed residents from state prisoners during the transition, some increase in state prisoner county backup will occur. Sufficient funds have been budgeted within the County Purchase of Services account to cover a temporary population increase during FY 2008.

THE FUTURE

In FY 2006, the cost of incarcerating one individual in a state prison totaled \$32,400. Despite operational efficiencies, that cost continues to rise. In FY 2007 the cost is anticipated to increase to \$34,600. Additionally, two of our institutions, New Jersey State Prison in Trenton and East Jersey State Prison in Rahway, are more than a century old, and the maintenance of

these, and all of our prisons, is a costly proposition. Therefore, the department continues to endorse the expanded use of Drug Courts throughout every county in the state. This would serve as a viable alternative to the non-violent, drug addicted offender who needs treatment — not incarceration.

Despite today's budget challenges, however, the New Jersey Department of Corrections will continue to ensure that those committed to the state correctional institutions are confined with the level of custody necessary to protect the public and that they are provided with the care, training and treatment needed to prepare them for reintegration into the community.

My staff and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.