Chairman James Plousis  
Budget Testimony  

Senate Budget Committee  
April 10, 2012

The New Jersey State Parole Board continues to serve as the state’s leading re-entry agency performing various tasks including the tracking and management of nearly 16,000 offenders, including approximately 5,100 sex offenders.

This year the issue of re-entry, and more specifically, how we, both as an agency and as a state, treat and attempt to rehabilitate offenders was brought into focus when the Governor Christie signed Executive Order 83 on November 28, 2011, establishing the “Governor’s Task Force for Recidivism Reduction.” This working group that draws members from several departments as well as the Judiciary, has been charged with the difficult task of studying the State’s efforts towards the reduction of criminal recidivism, benchmarking and evaluating those efforts, and then making recommendations for improvement.

The Task Force, led by former Deputy Attorney General Lisa Puglisi, is currently meeting with various departments to determine what is and perhaps more importantly what is not working now in the area of recidivism and how the processes can be improved. Their initial report is due to be released this summer.

As Co-Chair of the Task Force, I, along with the agency are fully coordinating the review of all state efforts in support of offender re-integration and we have entered in cooperative agreements to provide direct support to the Administrative Office of the Courts as well as the Juvenile Justice Commission. These agreements enable the State Parole Board to provide access to valuable resources and programs.

In addition to the Task Force, there are other issues to highlight at the State Parole Board with some of our partner agencies.

Due to effective coordination of efforts with the Department of Corrections we have been able to consolidate revocation hearings directly at the Central Reception Facility in West Trenton allowing us to discontinue the contracted Regional Assessment Center in Trenton, while still resulting in the depopulation of county jails with parole violators statewide.
With the Department of Labor, we are supporting their contracted awards for three Parole Employment Pilot Programs that are outcomes based contracts that provide immediate and sustainable employment for parolees.

With the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, this past year we have initiated the Criminal Justice Veterans Initiative, a program designed to aid in providing services to veterans who become involved in the CJ system. We have provided 2 regional law enforcement training forums, participated in Job Fairs with the American Legion, supported housing efforts for homeless veterans, and engaged with other County, State and Federal Veterans support partners.

Continuing with our commitment to ensuring public safety, the State Parole Board was a full participant in the design and implementation of the successful Fugitive Safe Surrender Initiative last year in New Brunswick/Somerset, and we are in the forefront of the planning and implementation team for the upcoming Fugitive Safe Surrender Initiative in Atlantic City on April 21st.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I welcome any questions you might have.