

**Discussion Points**

1. In an effort to reduce the number of inmates who are housed by the Department of Corrections and to reduce overall costs interest has been shown by the Legislature to expand medical parole eligibility to the number of State Sentenced prison inmates who, due to medical conditions, would no longer pose a danger to the public.

- **Question: How would the Parole Board monitor this additional population? What additional procedures, if any, would need to be put in place? What would be the potential costs to the Parole Board?**

The identification of those offenders eligible for medical parole consideration is the determination of the Department of Corrections. Accordingly, the State Parole Board does not anticipate any additional cost factor associated with the processing of those offenders referred by the Department of Corrections for medical parole consideration.

The State Parole Board would supervise the medical parole offender population through the Division of Parole in accordance with the agency's policies and procedures that include, among other factors, an assessment of the offender in the determination of the level of supervision required. At this time, no additional procedures need to be established in the supervision of the offenders. However, depending on new legislation, the State Parole Board will implement appropriate policies and procedures to comply with same and to ensure that the offenders are supervised at a level appropriate for public safety. The potential costs to the State Parole Board is dependent on the legislation, the number of eligible offenders and, of those eligible offenders, the number of offenders released and their respective level of supervision.

2. FY 2016 budget evaluation data indicates that the State Parole Board anticipates that it will be monitoring 152 offenders through the Satellite Based Monitoring of Sex Offenders program, a decrease of 209 participants or 58 percent under the number of offenders monitored by this program in FY 2015. In September 2014 the state Supreme Court ruled that sex offenders convicted before enactment of the "Sex Offender Monitoring Act" in 2007 could not be required to wear Global Positioning System (GPS) devices after being paroled.

- **Question: Is the reduction in the number of offenders monitored through the Satellite Based Monitoring of Sex Offenders program due entirely to the Supreme Court ruling? If not, please identify the other factor(s) causing the decrease, and the amount of decrease due to each factor. Given the magnitude of the decrease, why is the appropriation for this program (Budget page D-76) unchanged? What alternative forms of supervision, if any, were parolees formerly monitored by satellite shifted to? Is the Division**

**of Parole confident that these alternative forms of supervision are as effective in protecting public safety as GPS monitoring?**

Yes, the reduction in the number of offenders monitored through the Satellite Based Monitoring of Sex Offenders program is due to the Supreme Court ruling. In response to the Supreme Court ruling, the Division of Parole reviewed and reassessed every offender being removed from GPS. In order to continue to adequately monitor these offenders, and if appropriate, a special condition has been placed on the offender to be monitored in an equally effective supervision tool, the Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP). The EMP continues to be utilized by the parole officers in their supervision of not just those former GPS offenders, but also those offenders whose behavior requires this enhanced level of supervision. In addition, with the reallocation of the GPS appropriation to sex offender treatment programs, the Division of Parole is now able to address the needs of more sex offenders to ensure their successful reentry in the community and community safety.

The FY15 adjusted appropriation for the GPS program, when compared to the FY15 Appropriations bills, was reduced and reallocated among other State Parole Board programs, specifically, sex offender treatment programs, to reflect current year projected spending levels. It should be noted that the State Parole Board continues to supervise the same number of parolees and consequently, many of the fixed costs, such as officer salaries and non-salaries (vehicles, phones, equipment) remain. To be clear, caseloads are not program-based but rather offender-based. Further, parole officers supervise offenders that may participate in a few different programs, and consequently, it is difficult to provide a one-to-one correlation between a program caseload and its costs.

3. In his testimony before the appropriations committees during the FY 2015 budget hearings, Parole Board Chairman Plousis stated:

The State Parole Board was one of eight recipients throughout the United States that received the "Second Chance Act Adult Offender Reentry Program for Planning and Demonstration Projects" grant from the United States, Bureau of Justice Assistance. This grant will support a reentry program that provides evidence-based services targeting medium to high risk offenders.

- **Question: Please provide a description and status report on this program. Has the Parole Board determined that the program should be continued and/or expanded with State funds?**

Two consecutive Second Chance Act (SCA) grants were awarded to State Parole Board during 2013 and 2014 in an effort to reduce recidivism of medium to high risk parolees returning to Union County. A strategic reentry plan and a planning and implementation guide was completed at the end of the first grant (Planning grant) and was used to support the application for the second grant (Implementation grant). The grant period for the

Implementation grant was one year beginning September 2013 through September 2014. However, a one year, no-cost grant extension was awarded to State Parole Board for the full implementation of the program to be completed by September 2015. Actual recruitment of participants began in May 2014 and continued through January 2015.

The United States Bureau of Justice Assistance, in administering these grants, is also providing training on proper case management and data collection practices in line with best practices and an evidence based approach. The State Parole Board is actively collaborating with the Urban League and the Reconnections program in Union County, Trinitas, Union County College and members of the Union County Ex-Offender Reentry Task Force (UCERTF). Participants will receive a minimum of 6 months of programs and services including case management to complete participation. To date, there have been 27 successful participants that have met all program requirements, that is, 3 to 6 months of case management, at least one referral for services (mental health, housing, substance abuse, employment, education, social services) by case managers and have not recidivated. There are currently another 27 participants actively involved in the program.

On March 11, 2015 at a ceremony conducted during the Union County Reentry Task Force meeting, offender participants shared their experiences in the program with stakeholders indicating that the program made a real difference for them in their reentry experience into the community. Case managers' dedication to the offenders from pre through post release was highlighted as well as, the role of the State Parole Board who leads this grant and continues to provide valuable input through staff time and other tangible resources. The high acceptance rate (86%) of the program recruitments also indicates that offenders being released to the community are very welcoming of assistance and case management. Stakeholders in the county have been invigorated by the efforts and continue to work very diligently in ensuring that the program continues to build momentum through the sharing of information and resources and the continued discussion and action on issues facing the ex-offender population. The State Parole Board will be submitting an application under a new grant to maintain this initiative and welcomes the opportunity to expand same into other counties in the event State funds are allocated.

4. Continuing budget language implemented in FY 2012, would allow for the transfer of up to \$3 million from the Community Resource Center Program account to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Employment and Training Services Program for parolee employment services from contracted providers (Budget page D-77). The FY 2016 recommendation for this account totals \$11.381 million, \$200,000 under the FY 2015 adjusted appropriation.

- **Question:** What amount has been transferred annually for the period FY 2012 – FY 2015 pursuant to this language? What specific employment services were provided annually, and to how many participants? How are parolees chosen to receive the services provided? How successful has this program been in aiding parolees in obtaining meaningful employment? Is

**there any data available concerning the recidivism of employees participating in this program?**

The table below reflects the annual funding transferred to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development for the Parolee Employment Placement Program (PEPP).

Fiscal Year	Transfer Amount
2012	\$600,000
2013	\$1,022,415
2014	\$1,250,000
2015	\$2,613,400

The Parolee Employment Placement Program is a collaborative effort between the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) and the State Parole Board to leverage resources and maximize the potential for parolees to successfully transition to employment. According to data supplied from LWD, 898 offenders have participated in the program since its inception in November 2011. Services provided to participants include job coaching/preparation, as well as, employment placement and retention. In addition, each contractor is responsible for ensuring that all participants of the Parolee Employment Placement Program (PEPP) are registered for service with the One Stop Career Center within the geographical location they service, which provide an array of workforce readiness services. The contracts, administered by LWD, are outcome based with compensation tied to performance objectives. Parolees are chosen to receive these services based on an assessment of need by a parole officer. Thereafter, the parole officer monitors program compliance and attendance of parolee participants.

Employment retention data supplied by LWD indicates that of the 898 participants, 76% were able to retain a job after placement of at least 30 days, with 59% of the participants retaining a job at least 90 days after placement. Given this statistical data, those that have obtained jobs, have successfully begun the transition into the ranks of the employed, establishing resumes and gaining experience as they seek to graduate from entry level jobs into full time sustainable positions and careers.

Since any recidivism study requires a minimum of three years of data and the program started in 2012, the first group of individuals that may be studied will not be available until the end of 2015.