



County Prosecutors Association Opposes Senate and Assembly Bills

The County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey (CPANJ) is strongly opposed to Assembly Bill A6206 and Senate Bill S5000, which propose wide-ranging reforms to New Jersey's parole system. While we support efforts to promote successful reentry and reduce unnecessary reincarceration, this legislation, as drafted, raises profound concerns for victim rights, public safety, accountability, and the integrity of the parole process. CPANJ's principal concerns are outlined below:

First, New Jersey's parole system is recognized as one of the most effective in the nation which begs the question of why "reforms" are needed at all. The New Jersey Parole Board maintains a commendable track record regarding supervising individuals released on parole, ensuring their successful reintegration while prioritizing public safety. New Jersey's structured approach with graduated sanctions prior to revocation has proven effective in reducing recidivism without compromising community well-being. The New Jersey model has resulted in parole revocation statistics of approximately 6%, which is well below the national average of 10%. It should be noted that of the 6% of parole revocations that have occurred, the vast majority involved NERA (No Early Release Act) offenses and sex offenses which are arguably the most violent offenses in New Jersey. These offenders would be the primary beneficiaries of this lenient legislation.

Second, the proposed legislation creates potential public safety risks instead of reducing them. Limiting the ability to revoke parole for serious and persistent infractions, that, under this legislation, are defined as mere "technical violations" not subject to revocation, undermines the authority of the parole board and weakens the guardrails set to reduce recidivism and protect the public. CPANJ has serious concerns about the implications of reducing oversight and consequences on individuals who have already been convicted of violent offenses (and therefore no longer enjoy the presumption of innocence), are still serving a sentence under the care and custody of the Department of Corrections, yet have

demonstrated a serious pattern of non-compliance with conditions that are simply put in place to rehabilitate them.

While it is appropriate to limit incarceration for minor “technical violations” (curfew violation, failures to report, failure to pay fines, residence reporting etc.) more substantial infractions or serious and persistent violations by violent offenders should trigger stricter and more prompt responses. By way of example, a convicted sex offender who consistently fails to report, did not report an accurate address, has a “no contact with minors” condition and is found living with a minor child should face more severe consequences for those “technical violations.” The same would apply for a violent offender who had a “no contact” provision with a previous victim of domestic violence.

Third, A6206 and S5000 unduly shorten supervision with its revisions on compliance credits. While incentivizing good behavior can be a sound policy tool, A6206’s and S5000’s compliance credit structure is overly broad and insufficiently tied to measurable rehabilitation. Currently, parolees receive one day of compliance credit for every six days (5 days per month). A6206 and S5000 propose one day for every two days in compliance (15 days per month) as well adding retroactive credits for the past 12 months to reduce supervision for all parolees for up to six months.

The accumulation of credits could substantially shorten parole terms, even when the underlying offense was a serious NERA offense. In practice, A6206 and S5000 would award compliance credits when an offender has not complied with a single condition of supervision as long as he or she has not been convicted of another crime. Compliance credits should be measured by truly making satisfactory progress toward rehabilitation.

Finally, these bills do not include meaningful provisions to ensure that victims remain informed, protected, and heard throughout the parole process. A6206 and S5000 would limit the circumstances under which violators can be swiftly returned to custody, including those with a history of domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, or intimidation of witnesses. Victims rely on prompt responses to violations to maintain safety and stability; requiring additional procedural hurdles before a violator can be detained may leave victims vulnerable to renewed harassment or harm. The bill does not clearly protect the right of victims to receive timely notice of violations, proposed releases, or credits applied that may shorten supervision periods. New Jersey has long been a national leader in victim rights. A6206 and S5000 risk eroding those protections.

“New Jersey’s parole system already strikes a careful and effective balance between rehabilitation, accountability, and public safety. The proposed legislation risks tipping that balance in a way that diminishes oversight of violent offenders, weakens consequences for repeated noncompliance, and erodes hard-won protections for victims. Reform should be guided by data, individualized assessment, and public safety, not broad mandates that limit the ability of parole officers and prosecutors to intervene when warning signs are clear. Our responsibility is first and foremost to protect the public and to ensure that victims remain

informed, heard, and safe throughout the parole process.” stated Atlantic County Prosecutor William E. Reynolds.

The overall impact of this legislation undermines the deterrent effect of parole oversight. By reducing consequences for noncompliance and shortening supervision periods without individualized assessment, A6206 and S5000 risk diminishing the integrity of the parole process. The current successful system relies on clear expectations and predictable responses to noncompliance.

CPANJ appreciates the Legislature’s commitment to fair and effective criminal justice policy. However, A6206 and S5000, in their current form, would: (1) weaken public safety protections; (2) reduce accountability for parolees; (3) erode long-standing victim rights; and (4) limit the ability of parole officers to intervene appropriately in high-risk situations. For these reasons, CPANJ strongly opposes Assembly Bill A6206 and Senate Bill S5000.

Bradley D. Billhimer, Ocean County Prosecutor

President – County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey