

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

## GOVERNOR MURPHY SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING TASK FORCE FOR THE CONTINUED TRANSFORMATION OF YOUTH JUSTICE IN NEW JERSEY

**TRENTON** – Governor Murphy today signed an executive order establishing the Task Force for the Continued Transformation of Youth Justice. The Task Force, consisting of varied members from both the public and private sectors, will review policies and evaluate the state's juvenile justice system.

"New Jersey has the shameful distinction of having the largest black-white youth incarceration gap in the nation," said **Governor Phil Murphy**. "We cannot and will not accept these inequities any longer. I've created this task force to ensure that New Jersey's juvenile justice system reflects New Jersey values, including safety, dignity, and fairness."

The existing Juvenile Justice Commission has been conducting ground-breaking work to reduce its incarcerated youth population through the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), designated as a national model for juvenile detention reform by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Through the Commission's efforts, New Jersey has made great strides in modernizing its juvenile justice system. However, large racial disparities in youth incarceration rates persist, and must be addressed.

The Task Force will also focus on the goal of reducing recidivism in New Jersey, and will provide expert analysis and recommendations to improve the state's juvenile justice system, such as:

- Addressing New Jersey's racial disparities;
- Reviewing stationhouse adjustment data;
- Evaluating the current Youth Services Commission;
- Conducting a comprehensive review of facilities;
- Determining potential reinvestment of current youth incarceration funds;
- Implementing a deadline for closure of the New Jersey Training School for Boys and the Female Secure Care and Intake Facility;
- Recommending the creation of new youth rehabilitation centers; and
- Reviewing grants for juvenile parole.

The Task Force will be required to provide an initial report of its findings within six months.

"New Jersey has made progress over the past decade in reducing the number of incarcerated children, but extreme racial disparities in these incarceration rates remain," said **Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver**, who also serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs. "The Task Force Governor Murphy has established today will explore solutions for narrowing the prison pipeline with a thorough examination of current rehabilitation practices. It is a tremendous step in the right direction."

"The reform of New Jersey's juvenile justice system has been nothing short of remarkable and has made our state a national model," said **Attorney General Gurbir Grewal**. "The Task Force for the Continued Transformation of Youth Justice in New Jersey will bring everyone to the table to formulate the next steps we take in creating a system that is fair, just and truly rehabilitates young lives."

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Office of Governor PO Box 001

Trenton, NJ 08625

609-292-6000

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