



## Governor Christie Calls On Legislature To Join Chief Justice And Move Forward With Bail Reform

*"Reforming our bail system has been a top priority of mine, and I am glad the Chief Justice and his committee have put together a thoughtful, comprehensive proposal on how to accomplish it. In particular, I was pleased the committee supported my proposal to increase public safety by allowing judges to consider the dangerousness of a defendant when deciding whether to grant bail or order detention until trial. This will strengthen our justice system, protect witnesses from intimidation, and prevent proven criminals from engaging in more criminality while they await justice. I urge the Legislature to join me, the Chief Justice, and these committee members by moving as quickly as possible to put this constitutional amendment before voters."*

– Governor Chris Christie, March 20, 2014

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*In Case You Missed It:*

### NJ Supreme Court Committee Urges Historic Changes To State's Bail System

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[Star-Ledger](#)

3/20/14

A committee named by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner is urging historic changes in how New Jersey treats defendants before their trial.

A committee appointed by the state's chief judge today recommended a historic shift in how New Jersey treats defendants before trial, urging a greater focus on the safety of the community -- and not money -- in deciding who goes free and who remains locked up.

The recommendations are included in a 120-page report issued today by the 26-member panel of judges, prosecutors and lawyers appointed by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner last year to study the state's bail system and delays in bringing cases to trial. ...

"Our criminal justice system stands on two bedrock principles: that individuals accused of a crime are innocent until proven guilty, and that they are entitled to a speedy trial," the committee wrote in outlining its mission. "Yet many defendants are detained in jail before and during trial -- while they are presumed innocent -- because they cannot post bail; and all too often defendants have to wait far more than a year to see their day in court."

The recommendations have enlisted broad support from a cross-section of those inside and outside the criminal justice system convinced the current setup is broken and needs to be changed.

Politicians like Gov. Chris Christie have pushed for a system that considers the dangerousness of defendants so that they don't commit other crimes while they're out on bail.

And civil liberties advocates prefer a pretrial release system that gauges a defendant's risk so that those too poor to come up with bail are not held in county jails for extended periods of time simply because they can't pay.

"Prosecutors, defense attorneys, civil libertarians, judges and court administrators have joined voices with representatives of the legislative and executive branches to say that the current system of bail and detention promotes neither justice nor public safety," said Alexander Shalom, the senior staff attorney for the ACLU of New Jersey. "These seemingly strange bedfellows all recognize that a system where hundreds of people are jailed because they don't have a few hundred dollars to post bail unfairly jails the poorest among us not the most dangerous among us." ...