

# Breaking The Cycle Of Addiction & Saving Lives

*Governor Christie Is Committed To Developing A Smarter Approach To Helping Ex-Offenders Re-Enter Society While Keeping Violent Offenders Off The Streets*

*"New Jersey has a strong record of helping rehabilitate offenders and providing the services they need to be successful in society, significantly decreasing their likelihood of reoffending and improving public safety. But we can do better to make our re-entry programs more efficient, successful and effective - helping even more individuals get the support they need to change their lives for the better and break the cycle of offending and reoffending."*

*– Governor Chris Christie, November 28, 2011*

## A SMARTER AND MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO PRISONER RE-ENTRY

### Governor Chris Christie Is Building On New Jersey's Strong Record Of Combating Recidivism:

In November 2011, taking action to build on the nationally recognized success of New Jersey's prisoner re-entry, rehabilitation and prevention programs, Governor Chris Christie outlined an initiative to help even more offenders get the support they need to successfully re-enter society, break the cycle of criminality and lead productive lives.

New Jersey is widely recognized as a national leader in reducing incidents of recidivism and reducing its prison population:

- The state's 11 percent recidivism decline is among the steepest declines of any state according to the Pew Center on the States' State of Recidivism report, "The Revolving Door of America's Prisons."
- Since 1999, New Jersey's prison population has declined more than 20 percent.

### Ongoing Program Assessment And A Real-Time Recidivism Database:

The path forward to improve prisoner re-entry requires the Administration to gauge the successes, failures and the depth of gaps in program delivery – inside and outside of prison. Programming gaps will be rectified by expanding existing, successful programs and hitting capacity thresholds, particularly relating to program delivery within prison.

- Data will be used to populate a real-time recidivism database, which will allow the Administration to track outcomes for individuals and trends and level of effectiveness in programs in a real-time manner.

### Expanding The Drug Court Program For Non-Violent Offenders:

Last year, Governor Christie followed through on his commitment to take a smarter and more effective approach in how the State treats drug-addicted offenders by signing into law landmark, bipartisan legislation to put in place a statewide, mandatory drug court program. The legislation acted on the principles laid out by Governor Christie– that no life is disposable and that it is a common sense, fiscal, and moral imperative to help individuals dealing with drug addiction reclaim their lives with treatment, rather than warehousing them in prison.

*In fiscal year 2014, Governor Christie further acts on his commitment by increasing funding by **\$4.5 million** for drug court expansion and treatment. This additional funding will permit the Department of Human Services to expand treatment to approximately 250 clients in both inpatient and outpatient facilities.*

## **WHILE PROVIDING HELP TO THOSE RE-ENTERING SOCIETY, GOVERNOR CHRISTIE HAS REMAINED COMMITTED TO KEEPING VIOLENT OFFENDERS OFF THE STREET**

### Reforming Bail Laws To Keep Violent Offenders In Jail While Awaiting Trial:

Governor Chris Christie has proposed a constitutional amendment modifying the rules governing the right to bail in New Jersey. The move, which parallels the federal system, aims to provide our courts with the ability to keep dangerous

offenders in jail and off community streets until trial, enhancing the integrity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in New Jersey and preventing additional, senseless acts of violence before they occur.

- This common sense proposal represents the next step in the Governor's call to reform the state's system of bail to better ensure the safety and security of New Jersey's communities from violent offenders, particularly those with a demonstrated record of violence.

#### **Repealing Mandatory Early Release Legislation, And Restoring Parole Board Discretion:**

Governor Chris Christie took action to protect the public safety of New Jerseyans and provide needed reform to state law governing New Jersey's Parole Board with a conditional veto of Senate Bill 2308.

- As written, S-2308 would have increased the cycle from every three years to every 10 years of mandatory parole review, rather than address the fundamental problems that have stemmed from statutorily-mandated parole review, including the impact on crime victims and their families and the failure to consider inmates' rehabilitative progress in granting a parole review.

### **REAFFIRMING THAT NO LIFE IS DISPOSABLE**

Acting on his belief that every human life is precious, while fulfilling his commitment to emphasize drug rehabilitation efforts and his different approach dealing with drug abuse and addiction, Governor Chris Christie signed the bipartisan Overdose Protection Act (S2082) into law.

The legislation takes a two-prong approach to help prevent drug overdose deaths in New Jersey:

- Provides legal protection to people who are in violation of the law while they are attempting to help a drug overdose victim;
- Eliminates negative legal action against health care professionals or bystanders who administer overdose antidotes in life-threatening situations.

The bill combines important aspects from the Opioid Antidote and Overdose Prevention Act with the Good Samaritan Act, which Governor Christie recommended changes to in October 2012.