

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 83

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey ("State") is committed to improving both the efficiency of governmental functions and the delivery of essential services for the people of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, a major function of State government is the fair and orderly administration of our criminal laws; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's criminal justice system appropriately embodies a broad range of goals including punishment, deterrence, reform, and prevention designed to maintain public safety; and

WHEREAS, an efficient criminal corrections system should include alternatives to pure incarceration that recognize established techniques for treatment and intervention that may better serve the public by breaking the cycle of criminality caused by repeat offenders; and

WHEREAS, effective and appropriate treatment and re-entry programs can lower recidivism rates, reduce the population of the State's prison system, and help transform offenders into productive members of our communities; and

WHEREAS, as a nationally recognized leader in the reduction of recidivism rates, New Jersey must continue to lead national efforts to eradicate the causes of career criminal conduct; and

WHEREAS, the Executive and Judicial branches of State government currently invest more than \$200 million a year on a multitude of programs treating offenders; and

WHEREAS, one of these successful programs, New Jersey's Drug Court, has demonstrated promise as a means of reducing recidivism. The Drug Court program allows substance-abusers without prior convictions for violent crimes who are charged with new non-violent offenses an alternative to incarceration.

The Drug Court program emerged from research showing that offenders dependent on drugs or alcohol often revert to crime following incarceration if denied appropriate treatment, monitoring, and supervision. Court ordered intervention presents an effective and humane response to crimes committed by drug or alcohol dependent offenders, and helps to achieve the overriding goal of the New Jersey Code of Criminal Justice to protect public safety by reducing the incidence of crime; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's Drug Court Program currently allows participation only by those who affirmatively seek admission, it is in the public interest to broaden this successful program to reach drug dependent offenders who do not initially seek admission but who nonetheless need and may benefit from the court-supervised drug treatment; and

WHEREAS, legacy development and organization of treatment and re-entry programs created a decentralized and uncoordinated system that hampers the State's ability to identify and build upon successful programs such as the Drug Court and develop new plans to increase effective intervention;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHRIS CHRISTIE, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. There is hereby created a Governor's Task Force for Recidivism Reduction, hereinafter referred to as the "Task Force."

2. The Governor shall select a Task Force Director ("Director"), who, along with the Chairman of the New Jersey State Parole Board ("Chairman"), shall lead the Task Force,

ensure its mandates are performed and report to the Governor on an ongoing basis its findings and achievements. The Task Force shall consist of representatives of the Judiciary and various Executive Departments who, through legislation, departmental charge of responsibility or policy initiative, control or administer programs or treatment that may have an effect upon prisoner re-entry or prisoner recidivism rates. The Director and Chairman shall choose appropriate representatives from any Departments deemed as necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Order. The Task Force shall consist of individuals who have practical experience, knowledge or expertise in the areas of a) treatment or programming for offenders; b) mental health or drug or alcohol addiction; c) state government operations that could potentially remove barriers to successful re-entry; and d) performance benchmarking and evaluation. Members of the Task Force shall serve through inter-governmental mobility assignments. The Task Force shall organize as soon as practicable after the appointment of its members.

3. The Task Force is authorized to call upon any department, office or agency of State government to provide such information, resources or other assistance deemed necessary to discharge its responsibilities under this Order. Each department, officer, division and agency of this State is hereby required to cooperate with the Task Force and to furnish it with such information, personnel and assistance as is necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Order.

4. The Task Force is charged with studying the State's efforts towards the reduction of criminal recidivism, creating a system whereby those efforts can be benchmarked and continually evaluated, then presenting ongoing recommendations

to the Governor regarding how best to ensure the effectiveness and success of this State's efforts towards recidivism reduction. The recommendations will be based upon input from all of the various stakeholders, widely recognized best practice models, and a performance benchmarking and measurement system.

5. The Task Force may consult with the provider community, stakeholders, practitioners, experts or other knowledgeable individuals in the public or private sector on any aspect of its mission.

6. The Task Force shall engage a college or university for the creation of an initial benchmarking study. The product of this study shall be a report of the effectiveness and performance of all present offender treatment and programming that may affect recidivism.

7. The Task Force shall develop a system for performance measurement designed to inform the Task Force of ongoing programmatic successes and weaknesses. Performance measurement shall greatly influence the Task Force's recommendations for programmatic development and priorities.

8. The Task Force shall embrace the widely accepted principles of evidence-based best practices. The Task Force will develop protocols for the determination of what constitutes evidence-based programming and will formulate, then recommend, the maximum allowable percentage of State supported non-evidence based programming.

9. The Task Force shall coordinate and assist the Judiciary with the development of a program to effectuate an expansion of the Drug Court Program.

10. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
28th day of November,
Two Thousand and Eleven,
and of the Independence of
the United States, the Two
Hundred and Thirty-Sixth.

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

[seal]

Attest:

/s/ Jeffrey S. Chiesa

Chief Counsel to the Governor