



State of New Jersey

STATE PAROLE BOARD

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Barnes Emphasizes Parole Board's Reentry Efforts, Sex Offender Supervision in Budget Testimony *Newly Appointed Parole Board Chairman, FBI Veteran, Testifies Before Assembly Budget Committee*

TRENTON – Peter J. Barnes Jr., newly appointed as Chairman of the New Jersey State Parole Board, today outlined the Administration's \$98 million budget proposal for the agency, for Fiscal Year 2008 during testimony before the Assembly Budget Committee.

Chairman Barnes, a former State Assemblyman and member of the Law and Public Safety Committee, served for 26 years as an FBI agent in San Francisco, Newark, New Brunswick and Piscataway; for two years as Director of Public Safety for the City of Edison, and served twice as Director of Public Safety in East Brunswick Township.

"Our goal is the successful reentry of ex-offenders back into society," Barnes said during his testimony. "Under my Chairmanship the Parole Board will continue to focus its efforts on major obstacles that keep ex-offenders from changing their behavior and turning away from crime: Lack of employment opportunities; lack of education and job skills; lack of strong family connections; drug addiction; mental illness and chronic disabilities."

There are currently 14,396 individuals under Parole supervision in New Jersey. It costs \$3,195 per year to keep one individual under Parole supervision, or about \$8.75 per day, though there are additional costs for parolees in programs such as Electronic Monitoring, Global Positioning System (GPS) Monitoring, Day Reporting Centers and Residential Community Programs.

The State Parole Board's Fiscal 2008 budget request is identical to the Fiscal 2007 budget, and includes savings due to the deferment of essential expenses that can be held for at least the next fiscal year.

The budget will allow the Parole Board to hire a new class of Parole Officer recruits. The new hires are essential for two important reasons. First, though the number of offenders on parole tends to stay stable from year to year, the agency expects to lose 10 percent of its law enforcement workforce due to retirements.

Second, the Parole caseload of sex offenders is constantly growing. There are currently 4,231 sex offenders under Parole supervision in New Jersey, and about 25 are added each month. These sex offenders will remain on the caseload for decades, due to sentencing guidelines requiring lifetime supervision for these dangerous offenders. The Parole Board is the only agency in New Jersey, and one of the few in the nation, that manages sex offenders sentenced to Supervision for Life.

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The Fiscal 2008 proposal will also allow the Parole Board's Electronic Monitoring Unit to continue providing GPS monitoring for up to 250 of the state's highest-risk sex offenders, and to continue operating Radio Frequency home confinement for 400 inmates and technical parole violators.

The budget proposal will also allow for the maintenance of Community-Based Programs, such as Day Reporting Centers and Residential Halfway Back programs, the Program for Returning Offenders with Mental Illness Safely and Effectively (PROMISE), the ongoing partnership with Federally Qualified Health Centers, and the newly established Comprehensive Substance Abuse Treatment program. These programs contribute to public safety by providing workforce readiness, job training, health and other services that address the leading problems that hold ex-offenders back from becoming law-abiding citizens.

"With the Governor's and the Legislature's continued support in Fiscal Year 2008, the New Jersey State Parole Board will continue its mission to protect public safety, prevent recidivism, and help ex-offenders change their behaviors and their lives, for the good of society, their neighborhoods and their families," Barnes concluded in his testimony.

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