



State of New Jersey

STATE PAROLE BOARD

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Rutgers Study Shows Parole Succeeds in Reducing Recidivism

TRENTON – A four-year study by the Rutgers University School of Criminal Justice indicates that a group high-risk offenders who were released to parole supervision, had significantly lower re-arrest rates than similar groups of offenders who “maxed out,” or left prison without supervision.

The “Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) Final Report” was presented to Chairman Peter J. Barnes Jr. and the members of the New Jersey State Parole Board today, during the Board’s annual public meeting.

The study was one of several topics presented by outside experts at the Board’s annual public meeting. Dr. Bruce D. Stout, Associate Professor of Criminology at The College of New Jersey; Dr. Todd R. Clear, Distinguished Professor of Criminal Justice at John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York; and the Rev. Reginald Osborne of Bethel Worldwide Outreach Ministries in Newark, discussed the State Parole Board’s launch of Residential Assessment Centers (RACs) as a public safety initiative for the assessment of technical parole violators.

Camden Police Director Luis A. Vega and Newark Police Director Garry McCarthy discussed the partnerships by which State parole officers and city police officers team up for intelligence sharing and street operations, to enhance public safety in their cities. US Marshal James Plousis discussed the State Parole Board’s role in last month’s very successful Fugitive Safe Surrender initiative.

Senior Parole Officer Angela Marshall and Director Janice L. Kovach of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs’ Division on Women discussed the Female Offender Reentry Group Effort (FORGE) and plans to expand gender-responsive reentry programs.

Dr. Bonita Veysey of the Rutgers University School of Criminal Justice presented the “Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) Final Report.” She and Dr. Jennifer Lanterman studied the success in New Jersey of SVORI, a nationwide, Federally funded initiative aimed at reducing the recidivism of offenders after their release from prison. The State Parole Board was the lead SVORI agency in New Jersey, where the program was targeted at parolees returning from prison to Camden and Essex counties.

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The SVORI parolees were subject to intensive law enforcement supervision and given access to a variety of community reentry programs. The Rutgers University study compared those SVORI parolees from October 1, 2003 through June 30, 2007, with a cohort of parolees subject to general supervision, and with a cohort of individuals who maxed out from prison without supervision.

The study found that:

- Only 41 percent of adult SVORI parolees were re-arrested, compared with 51 percent of general parolees and 73 percent of max-outs
- Only 7 percent of adult SVORI parolees were re-arrested on a violent charge, compared with 13 percent of general parolees and 26 percent of max-outs
- Only 13 percent of SVORI parolees were arrested on a drug charge, compared with 30 percent of regular parolees and 41 percent of max-outs
- Only 21 percent of adult SVORI parolees were arrested on “other” types of charge, compared with 24 percent of general parolees and 35 percent of max-outs
- SVORI parolees were more likely than regular parolees to be arrested on a weapons charge (9 percent compared to 3 percent), but less likely than max-outs (12 percent)

The State Parole Board has adopted many of the lessons learned from the SVORI program’s success, in the agency’s use of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) for parole supervision, under Governor Corzine’s Another Chance reentry initiative.

The New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB) is New Jersey’s lead reentry agency, and works to ensure ex-prisoners return to society as law-abiding citizens. As required by law, appointed Parole Board Members and staff conduct more than 20,000 hearings per year, solicit input from victims and decide parole matters. SPB’s sworn parole officers supervise more than 15,000 offenders statewide. In addition, SPB is New Jersey’s primary law enforcement agency responsible for sex offender supervision. SPB officers are also active partners with multiple Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies and task forces. Finally, SPB’s Community Programs Division partners with government, non-profit and private agencies to connect ex-prisoners with vocational, mental health and related services, targeted to break the cycle and risk of crime.

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