

***New Jersey***  
***State Commission of Investigation***



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**Immediate Release**

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## **SCI APPLAUDS INDICTMENTS OF INMATES WITH CELLPHONES**

TRENTON – The State Commission of Investigation Chair W. Cary Edwards today commended coordinated efforts by the New Jersey State Attorney General’s Office and the Department of Corrections which resulted in criminal charges against 35 state inmates for possession of illegal cellphones.

In a three-year investigation of the activities of violent street gangs inside New Jersey prisons, the SCI highlighted the enormity of the cellphone problem and revealed how inmates use smuggled phones and electronic devices to further their criminal enterprises while behind bars. In a November 2008 public hearing and in a subsequent May 2009 published report, the Commission detailed how inmates are exploiting weaknesses in the correctional system that threaten safety both inside and outside prison walls. The Commission’s findings included recommendations for major reforms of the correctional system.

“Law abiding citizens whose tax dollars support these prisons must have confidence that when criminals are incarcerated that they are not permitted to engage in further criminal behavior which inevitably puts public safety at risk,” Edwards said. “The SCI shall continue to report on the activities of organized criminal gangs in New Jersey and will assist law enforcement officials in their efforts to address this most serious issue.”

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***The State Commission of Investigation is an independent New Jersey watchdog agency established in 1968 to investigate organized crime and corruption, waste of tax money and other abuses of the public trust. Copies of the Commission’s report, “Gangland Behind Bars,” and other materials are available on-line at [www.state.nj.us/sci/index.shtm](http://www.state.nj.us/sci/index.shtm).***