

**SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 895
(First Reprint)**

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 895 (First Reprint) with my recommendations for reconsideration.

During my time as Governor, I have supported a comprehensive approach to criminal justice reform and reentry efforts. My Administration has been dedicated to helping inmates reintegrate into society following a criminal conviction or period of incarceration in ways beyond just the parole process. Specifically, we have reformed outdated, ineffective approaches to non-violent offenses and instituted programs designed to make a real difference in helping people reclaim their lives. Initiatives have included: expanding drug courts; offering job training and services to ex-offenders re-entering society; preventing employers from asking about a prospective employee's criminal history on an initial job application; expanding access to college degrees within correctional facilities; and decreasing wait times for expungement and expanding the types of expungable offenses. These initiatives have always been implemented with a focus on the safety of the public while helping those who have turned around their lives for the better.

This bill recognizes the need to connect inmates with reentry services prior to release from prison by tasking the Department of Corrections ("DOC") with assisting inmates in creating a reentry plan from the moment they enter DOC custody. I believe that connecting people with support services from the moment they enter prison and ensuring those services are available when they leave prison is essential. Codifying that

process will serve to support people in re-integrating, thereby reducing recidivism. Since DOC already provides these services, I am recommending minor technical amendments to ensure this process is instituted immediately.

However, this bill would also make substantial changes to the current parole process, removing certain discretion from the State Parole Board and enabling potentially dangerous inmates to be released early. I have always supported the authority of the State Parole Board to decide whether someone is ready to rejoin the community. That decision should not be based on an automatic presumption in favor of release, nor should the decision be rushed. In fact, in 2011, I signed a law repealing mandatory early release for inmates and restoring the authority of the State Parole Board to make the determination of whether an offender is ready to rejoin the community. The sponsors have offered no justification to retreat from this established process, and, therefore, I cannot support the provisions of this bill that would erode the State Parole Board's authority to use its expertise in deciding to grant parole release.

Accordingly, I herewith return Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 895 (First Reprint) and recommend that it be amended as follows:

<u>Page 2, Title, Line 1:</u>	Delete ", and amending"
<u>Page 2, Section 1, Lines 7-8:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Line 10:</u>	Delete "2." and insert "1."
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Lines 11-18:</u>	Delete in their entirety
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Line 19:</u>	After "a" insert "joint comprehensive"
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Lines 20-21:</u>	Delete "Division of Reentry and Rehabilitative Services"
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Line 21:</u>	Delete "prepare" and insert "assist"
<u>Page 2, Section 2, Line 21:</u>	Delete "for" and insert "with"

Page 2, Section 3, Line 25: Delete "3." and insert "2."

Page 2, Section 3, Line 26: Delete in its entirety

Page 2, Section 3, Line 27: After "services" insert "with the State Parole Board."

Page 2, Section 3, Lines 28-30: Delete in their entirety

Page 2, Section 3, Line 31: Delete "division" and insert "Division of Programs and Community Services in the Department of Corrections"

Page 2, Section 3, Line 36: Delete "community" and insert "community-based"

Page 2, Section 3, Line 38: Delete "prepare" and insert "assist in the preparation of"

Page 2, Section 3, Line 38: Delete "inmate for" and insert "inmate's"

Page 2, Section 3, Line 39: Delete "Appropriate staff" and insert "The reentry plan shall assist the inmate with identifying"

Page 2, Section 3, Lines 40-41: Delete in their entirety

Page 2, Section 3, Line 42: Delete "the community, to determine"

Page 2, Section 3, Line 44: Delete "shall" and insert "may"

Page 2, Section 3, Line 44: Delete "comprehensive"

Page 3, Section 3, Line 1: Delete "reentry plan" and insert "certificate of parole"

Page 3, Section 3, Line 2: After "release" insert ", pursuant to section 15 of P.L.1979, c. 441 (C.30:4-123.59)"

Page 3, Section 3, Line 16: Delete "division" and insert "State Parole Board"

Page 3, Section 3, Line 19: Delete "division" and insert "State Parole Board"

Page 3, Section 3, Line 20: After "appropriate" insert "post release"

Page 3, Section 4, Lines 25-47: Delete in their entirety

Page 4, Section 4, Lines 1-31: Delete in their entirety

Page 4, Section 5, Lines 33-48: Delete in their entirety

Page 5, Section 6, Lines 1-7: Delete in their entirety

Page 5, Section 7, Lines 9-47: Delete in their entirety

Page 6, Section 7, Lines 1-3: Delete in their entirety

Page 6, Section 8, Lines 5-37: Delete in their entirety

Page 6, Section 9, Lines 39-48: Delete in their entirety

Page 7, Section 9, Lines 1-47: Delete in their entirety

Page 8, Section 9, Lines 1-44: Delete in their entirety

Page 8, Section 10, Lines 46-47: Delete in their entirety

Page 9, Section 10, Lines 1-48: Delete in their entirety

Page 10, Section 10, Lines 1-47: Delete in their entirety

Page 11, Section 10, Lines 1-29: Delete in their entirety

Page 11, Section 11, Lines 31-46: Delete in their entirety

Page 12, Section 11, Lines 1-48: Delete in their entirety

Page 13, Section 12, Lines 1-6: Delete in their entirety

Page 13, Section 13, Lines 8-33: Delete in their entirety

Page 13, Section 14, Line 35: Delete "14." and insert "3."

Page 13, Section 14, Line 35: Delete "on the first day of the third month" and insert "immediately."

Page 13, Section 14, Lines 36-45: Delete in their entirety

[seal]

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Gregory L. Acquaviva

Chief Counsel to the Governor