ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 100

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY
District 7 (Burlington)
Assemblyman WILLIAM W. SPEARMAN
District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)
Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE
District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblyman Caputo

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Prison Gang Violence Task Force to study security and safety in State correctional facilities.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/25/2020)

AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION establishing a task force to study security and safety in the State's correctional facilities.

WHEREAS, The final report of the first Assembly Prison Gang Task Force found a number of serious issues concerning gang violence in the State's correctional facilities that compromise the safety and security of State correctional police officers and civilian employees; and

WHEREAS, The report recommended gang training for State correctional police officers and civilian staff, hiring practices designed to prevent gang members from obtaining employment within correctional facilities, new and additional equipment necessary to keep State correctional police officers safe from gang violence, and modifications to intelligence gathering procedures and dissemination of information in and between correctional facilities; and

WHEREAS, A subsequent report by the State Commission of Investigation found that the number of gang-affiliated inmates continued to rise and that these inmates utilized increasingly sophisticated methods for exploiting the security vulnerabilities of correctional facilities; and

WHEREAS, These facts raise serious questions about the continued prevalence of gangs and gang-related activities in the State's correctional facilities; the appropriateness of the State's programs and tactics for addressing the gang issue; the adequacy of State correctional police officer and facility administrator training and preparedness; the availability and utilization of safety equipment and apparel for and by State correctional police officers; the effectiveness of the intelligence gathering methods currently being used to uncover and thwart threats to the efficient and tranquil operation of the State's correctional facilities; and the efficacy of the current policies and procedures for investigating incidents, disruptions, riots, and other occurrences which pose a danger or risk to the safety, security, or well-being of the employees and inmates of the facility; and

WHEREAS, It is, therefore, altogether fitting and proper, and within the public interest, to establish a task force to study security and safety in the State's correctional facilities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. There is established a task force, to be known as the "Prison Gang Task Force," to review and study security and safety in New Jersey's correctional facilities, including, but not limited to:

a. the availability and utilization of administrative segregation for dangerous and disruptive inmates;

b. the availability and utilization of safety equipment and

apparel for and by State correctional police officers;

c. the adequacy of training and preparedness, particularly the level and effectiveness of Correctional Emergency Response Training (CERT);

d. the prevalence of gangs and gang-related activities in the State's correctional facilities and the adequacy and appropriateness of the State's programs and tactics for addressing the problem;

e. the intelligence gathering methods currently being used to uncover and thwart threats to the efficient and tranquil operation of the facility; and

f. the State's policies and procedures for investigating incidents, disruptions, riots, and other occurrences which pose a danger or risk to the safety, security, or well-being of the employees and inmates of that facility.

2. The task force shall consist of 11 members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, as follows:

a. Two members of the General Assembly, no more than one of whom shall be a member of the same political party;

b. Three State correctional police officers currently employed by a State correctional facility;

c. Two former State correctional police officers who retired from employment in a State correctional facility;

d. One member, who by education or experience, has expertise in gangs and gang-related activities;

e. Two members, who by education or experience, have expertise in correctional facility safety and security; and

f. One member, who by education or experience, has expertise in the operation and administration of correctional facilities.

3. The task force shall organize as soon as possible after the appointments of its members, but in no case later than 60 days after the approval of this resolution. From among themselves, the members shall select a chairperson and a vice chairperson. The members also shall appoint a secretary, who need not be a member of the task force.

Any vacancy in the task force shall be filled by appointment in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

The members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Any reimbursement of members shall be within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task force for its purposes.

4. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and shall avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county or municipal department, board, bureau, commission or agency as it may require and as may be available to it for its

purposes. The task force shall further be entitled to employ counsel and stenographic and clerical assistance and incur traveling and other miscellaneous expenses as it may deem necessary to perform its duties, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for its purposes.

5. The task force may conduct public hearings in furtherance of its general purposes at such place or places as it shall designate, at which it may request the appearance of officials of any federal, State, or interstate department, board, bureau, commission, agency, or authority and solicit the testimony of interested groups and the general public.

6. The task force shall report its progress to the Speaker and the members of the General Assembly no later than 120 days after its organization and shall report its final findings and recommendations, including any legislative proposals it may wish to make, to the Speaker and the members of the General Assembly no later than the first day of the thirteenth month following its organization.

STATEMENT

This Assembly Resolution establishes the Prison Gang Violence Task Force to study security and safety issues in the State's correctional facilities.

The task force is to consist of 11 members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, as follows: two members of the General Assembly, no more than one of whom shall be from the same political party; three State correctional police officers currently serving in State correctional facilities; two retired State correctional police officers; an expert in gangs or gang-related activities; two experts in correctional facility safety and security; and one expert in correctional facility operations and administration.

Among the topics and issues the task force is to study are: the availability and utilization of administrative segregation for dangerous and disruptive inmates; the availability and utilization of safety equipment and apparel for and by State correctional police officers; the adequacy of training and preparedness, particularly the level and effectiveness of Correctional Emergency Response Training (CERT); the prevalence of gangs and gang-related activities in the State's correctional facilities and the adequacy and appropriateness of the State's programs and tactics for addressing the problem; the intelligence gathering methods currently being used to uncover and thwart threats to the efficient and tranquil operation of the facility; and the State's policies and procedures for

investigating incidents, disruptions, riots, and other occurrences which pose a danger or risk to the safety, security, or well-being of the employees and inmates of that facility. The task force may conduct public hearings in furtherance of its general purpose.

The task force is to report its findings, along with any recommendations, to the Speaker and the members of the General Assembly no later than one year after it organizes.

While the task force members are to serve without compensation, they may be reimbursed for any expenses they incur in the performance of their duties, if funds are made available. Any vacancies in the membership are to be filled by appointment in the same manner as the original appointment.

The final report of the first Assembly Prison Gang Task force found a number of serious issues concerning gang violence in the State's correctional facilities that compromise the safety and security of State correctional police officers and civilian employees. In addition, a subsequent report by the State Commission of Investigation found that the number of gang-affiliated inmates continued to rise, and that these inmates utilized increasingly sophisticated methods for exploiting the security vulnerabilities of correctional facilities. These issues continue to raise serious questions about the safety and security in our State correctional facilities. This task force is being established to study these issues.