

SENATE BILL NO. 1841

To the Senate:

Pursuant to Article V, Section I, Paragraph 14 of the New Jersey Constitution, I am returning Senate Bill No. 1841 with my recommendations for reconsideration.

According to the statement, the bill intends to "clarify" that investigators employed by the New Jersey Department of Corrections are, in fact, police officers. The purported clarification, however, actually imposes substantial changes to powers and authority of these investigators, amending the civil service title series that applies to these investigators, collapsing all of the existing ranks in the unit into a single new position.

While I recognize the important and necessary function these investigators perform within the criminal justice system, I am concerned that this bill contributes to an already fractured system of State law enforcement. My recent budget message made clear that New Jersey can no longer afford the inefficiencies and waste produced by many overlapping responsibilities and redundancies across many existing governmental functions. As we define the "new normal" in New Jersey, we must be willing to examine how the State performs its many public duties, particularly before altering critical responsibilities such as law enforcement within the executive branch. A more rigorous analysis of the police and investigative units in the executive branch is thus warranted.

A review of the State's current statewide law enforcement system reveals a complicated and decentralized patchwork of officers and investigators across a number of state agencies,

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often without clearly understood lines of authority. In addition to the State Police and Division of Criminal Justice, who perform law enforcement functions as their core mission, police functions exist within myriad executive departments. For example, the Department of Environmental Protection currently oversees the State Park Police, who patrol and protect New Jersey's more than fifty state parks, forests and recreation areas. The Department of Human Services houses a police force supervising the State's developmental centers and psychiatric hospitals. And the Department of Corrections employs agents responsible for investigating crimes within correctional facilities, and the apprehension of escaped prisoners.

With these examples in mind, it is inappropriate to dramatically alter the structure of the Department of Corrections without first considering appropriate changes to the system of statewide law enforcement. Accordingly, I recommend that this bill be amended to create a study commission to examine law enforcement functions in the executive branch, and to provide recommendations about the feasibility of consolidation, absorption, or elimination of various policing functions.

Accordingly, I herewith return Senate Bill No. 1841 and recommend that it be amended as follows:

Page 2, Lines 2-3:  
Delete " , and  
supplementing chapter 3  
of Title 11A of the New  
Jersey Statutes"

Page 2, Section 1, Line 10:  
After "1.", delete "a",  
and before "and", insert  
"and investigators in  
the Department of  
Corrections"

Page 2, Section 1, Lines 18-23:  
Delete in their entirety

Page 2, Section 2, Lines 43-44:  
Delete "correctional  
police investigator  
employed by the  
Department of  
Corrections"

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Page 3, Section 2, Line 6: Delete "penal" and insert "correctional"

Page 3, Section 2, Line 10: Delete "penal" and insert "correctional"

Page 12, Section 3, Lines 9-24: After "(New section)", delete "The Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission shall effectuate the following title changes in the career service:

a. Investigator Secured Facilities shall be re-titled as correctional police investigator;

b. Senior Investigator Secured Facilities shall be re-titled as correctional police investigator;

c. Principle Investigator Secured Facilities shall be re-titled as correctional police investigator;

d. Assistant Chief Investigator Secured Facilities shall be re-titled as correctional police investigator;

e. Chief Investigator Secured Facilities shall be re-titled as correctional police investigator.

The title changes authorized under this section shall apply to all correctional police investigators employed by the New Jersey Department of Corrections." and insert, "a. There is hereby established the State Law Enforcement Resources Study Commission. The Study Commission shall review and evaluate the organization of the law enforcement resources utilized in the various State departments and agencies, and the functions served by these resources. It shall evaluate and make recommendations on whether any changes should be made to the current organization and operations of these resources, including whether the various

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police and other law enforcement units operating in State departments and agencies should be reorganized, consolidated, absorbed, reduced or eliminated. The Study Commission shall consult with all affected departments and agencies, which shall provide the study Commission with such assistance and information as may assist it in its work.

b. Membership. The Attorney General or designee shall Chair the Study Commission, and its membership shall include the Superintendent of State Police or designee and the Director of the Division of Criminal Justice, in the Department of Law and Public Safety, or designee. Other members of the Task Force may be appointed by the Governor and may include but not be limited to police officers, law enforcement officials, law enforcement, legal, and fiscal experts.

c. The Study Commission shall:

1.) identify entities performing police functions, investigative functions or any other criminal law enforcement function at the state level;

2.) study the operations and mission of these entities; determine if those entities are operating under the same or substantially similar rules, regulations or directives promulgated by the New Jersey Attorney General;

3.) determine if these entities perform unique or duplicative functions;

4.) study whether efficiencies may be realized if the entities functions were assumed in whole or in part by other state law enforcement entities;

5.) study, and evaluate whether any of the recommendations contemplated by this task force may have a deleterious effects on the subject entity's mission;

6.) provide any recommendations for the reorganization, consolidation, absorption or elimination of entities or functions.

d. The Study Commission shall issue an initial report to the Governor within six months of its formation. Thereafter, the Study Commission will continue to meet as needed to continue to review and revise, if necessary, the recommendations. The Study Commission shall expire upon the Governor's receipt of a report containing their final recommendations."

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

[seal]

Attest:

/s/Jeffrey S. Chiesa

Chief Counsel to the Governor