



Probation Association of New Jersey

Serving w Jersey Since 1904

An affiliate of the American Probation and Parole Association

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MPA

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Testimony of George P. Christie Senate Bill 1889

Senate Law and Public Safety Committee June 9, 2005

Probation and Sex Offenders

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Thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am George Christie, President of the Probation Association of New Jersey. PANJ represents the nearly 2,000 probation officers in New Jersey. I would like to take this opportunity to support Senate Bill 1889 and I would also like to strongly request that the legislation be amended to include probation officers in the pilot program.

Probation officers monitor between 10 and 20% of the State's more than 10,000 registered sex offenders. A larger number of offenders are on parole and many more are not under supervision but must register with the State. An offender who fails to register is guilty of a 4th degree offense and most often gets probation.

While probation and parole are separate in New Jersey, probation and parole officers often monitor the very same people. This is certainly the case with the State's most serious sex offenders who may be on parole and probation at the same time. It is therefore critical that probation and parole work together and maintain communication when dealing the most dangerous of New Jersey's citizens.

This is especially true for sex offenders. Probation officers supervise all three tiers of offenders. Our officers often encounter the most serious offenders in the process of re-offending in serious crimes like sexual assault. In fact, sex offenders have been placed on probation for the following crimes:

1. aggravated sex assault
2. sexual assault
3. aggravated criminal sexual contact
4. kidnapping
5. endangering the welfare of a child
6. Endangering the welfare of a child with porn

Any additional tracking of these dangerous individuals therefore needs to involve probation. GPS monitoring would therefore be helpful to probation officers in monitoring high tier II and Tier III cases to insure that these predators are not in places where children congregate like schools, parks, and playgrounds. Including probation officers in the legislation would also improve public safety by adding another level of law enforcement in the tracking of these predators.

I would therefore appreciate your consideration of an amendment to the legislation to include probation and probation officers in the GPS tracking of sex offenders under Senate Bill 1889. Thank you for your consideration and I am happy to take any questions.