

INSIGHT



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Gerry Gibbs & Jeanette Hoffman, Capital Impact Group

VOTERS OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVE BAIL REFORM

On Election Day, voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment reforming New Jersey's bail system, which PANJ strongly supports.

Key proposals of bail reform include mandating a system of non-monetary release options; allowing judges to deny bail for the most violent offenders; establishing a comprehensive pretrial services agency within each county to monitor and counsel those awaiting trial; and requiring arrestees to undergo a risk assessment before their initial bail hearing in order for the court to make individualized determinations of what, or if, monetary bail is appropriate.

PANJ has worked closely with state legislators on both sides of the aisle to pass this legislation. The program will go into effect in 2017 and we are working with the Judiciary to determine the implementation and the role New Jersey's Probation Officers will play.

PENSION BOARDS FILE LAWSUIT AGAINST CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION

The three state pension boards recently filed a lawsuit against Gov. Chris Christie for failing to provide legal and adequate pension funding in the FY 2015 state budget.

The Board of Trustees of Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), the Police and Fire Retirement System (PFRS), and the Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF) assert that Christie unlawfully derailed the proper funding of the state's \$80 billion pension system for political reasons.

The pension board reps said pension fund participants increased payment of their pension contributions from 3% to 7.1% and are on pace to reach 7.5% (PERS and TPAF) and from 8.5% to 10% (PFRS), while undergoing cost/value reductions of more than 32% (PERS and TPAF) and as much as 36% (PFRS).

The lawsuit was filed in Mercer County Chancery Court.

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OFFICIALS

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REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

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Anne Dutton, Morris
Brenda Jones, Essex
Miriam Abreu-Borchert, Hudson

Region 2

Edda Burry, AOC
Lynne Taylor, Somerset
Nicholas Briscuso, Monmouth

Region 3

A. Francis Nunan, Cape May
Susan Lively, Cumberland
Greg Wolf, Salem

A Message From The President

"You must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right." - Rosa Parks, Civil Rights Activist

PANJ and its membership continue to face numerous obstacles which have been presented by the Administration, the State Legislature, Agencies and our own Employer. The wave of anti-employee sentiment is not only prevalent in New Jersey, but also across the country.

PANJ is working to secure a fair contract which protects its members, not weakens them. We are working through litigation to make sure that our pension is properly funded and that we have a COLA adjustment when we retire. We also have agency appeals to protect our contractual language regarding our steps. Without your Union, PANJ, there is little hope of stemming the spread of low wages, job insecurity and economic instability for our members and their families.

We will not bow to the chorus of political leaders and pundits who wish to weaken our stability. We will continue to represent our members in solidarity and fairness.

PANJ is not fearful of what it is doing because it is right!

In Solidarity,

Dwight Covaleskie

Dwight Covaleskie
President



A Message From The Editor

Brothers and Sisters,

It is hard to believe that over a year has already passed since PANJ's current administration was elected and took office. They truly hit the ground running, with a lot of rough terrain to navigate ahead of them. But, they have made great strides and have come a long way since then.

I have had the privilege to witness, first-hand, how passionate they are about this Union and how hard they have worked toward achieving our common goals, including securing a fair contract for all of our members. We owe a debt of gratitude to all of them, but most especially to our President, Dwight Covaleskie; and to our First Vice Presidents of Line Staff and Supervisors respectively, Ellen Cribbin and Gavin Cummings.

There are still many long and tough battles ahead of them. But I am confident that with their perseverance and strong commitment to this cause, and a little patience on all of our part, that we will win this war!

In Solidarity,

Nick Briscuso

Nick Briscuso
Editor

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NEW FACES IN THE STATEHOUSE IN 2015

As a result of last year's elections, the New Year brought some new faces to the New Jersey Statehouse.

PANJ ally **Assemblyman Joe Cryan** was recently elected Union County Sheriff and will be leaving his position in the Assembly, as will be **Assemblywoman Celeste Riley** who was elected Cumberland County Sheriff. **Assemblyman Bonnie Watson Coleman** was recently elected to Congress in the 12th district and will be leaving the state Legislature. Special county conventions will be held in early 2015 to select replacements for each of these legislative seats.

Former Assemblyman Nilsa Cruz-Perez was sworn in to the state Senate in December, replacing Donald Norcross, who resigned after he was elected to Congress in November. Senator Cruz-Perez is the first Hispanic woman to serve in the New Jersey State Senate.

Replacing Senator Norcross as Senate Law and Public Safety Chair is **Senator Linda Greenstein**, who has been a strong advocate for probation in the past. **PANJ President Dwight Covaleskie** and CIG recently met with Senator Greenstein, who said she would post PANJ-supported recidivism legislation (A-2417/S-2334) at the Committee's meeting in January.

A Look Back At The 2014 PANJ-EF Conference

By Deneen Hohman, Conference Committee Chair

Thank you to all for another successful Conference! The Community Food Bank would like to thank everyone for their generous donation of 446 pounds of non-perishable items this year!!! The Conference committee members worked hard all year to make this conference great. We hope everyone enjoyed Quizzo night and the cards and dice to enhance the "Casino" theme. Congratulations to the winners, AC PO's, and the other 16 teams who participated in Quizzo night.

The training sessions were well attended. There were so many quality training topics provided for everyone; from practicing self-care to natural response control, sovereign citizens to NJ gangs, batterer to dog fighting, NJ deaf and hard of hearing to immigration consequences, and "I'm in charge" to "STOP IT", just to name a few. It was difficult to decide which ones to attend.

The Conference Committee will begin working on next year's conference in February. We all believe training is a very important, integral part of everyone's daily life interactions. We appreciate all constructive feedback and strive to provide updated and new topics.

We wish everyone a safe and happy winter. We hope to see everyone next year!!!

Thank you again for all your support!

Gloucester County Local 108 Holiday Party

By Chastity Robinson, SBPO, PANJ Local 108 Secretary

“Tis the season to be jolly....Fa La La La!”

In the past few years Gloucester County PANJ Local 108 collaborated with Camden County PANJ Local 109 to host a holiday celebration outside the office at a local restaurant at minimal cost to Probation Officers until December 2011. Over the years there have been good turnouts and we have had the pleasure of spreading holiday cheer with them. We became one big happy family and enjoyed each other’s company dancing the night away.

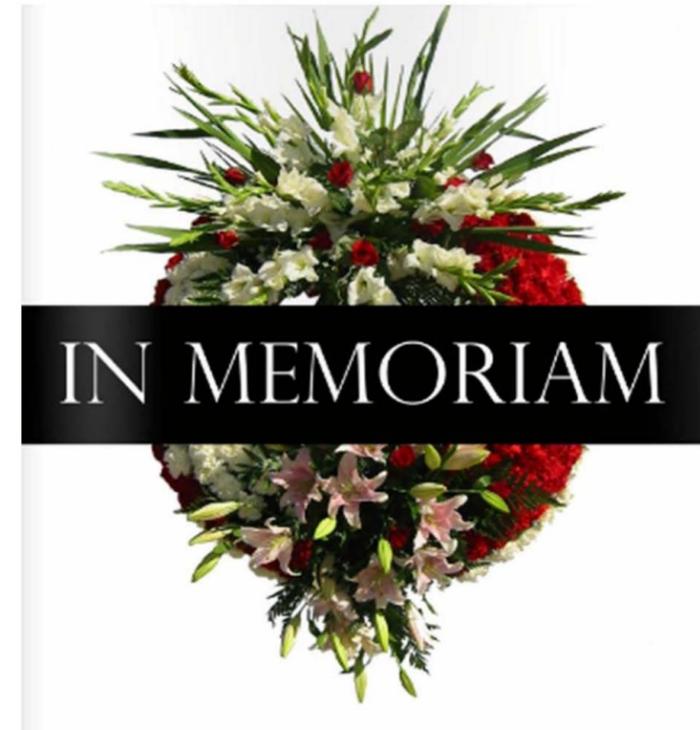
Together we collected gifts for **Toys for Tots**, made a “Very Merry Christmas” for children under the custody of the Department of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) through their Adopt-a-Child program and collected items for our local Gloucester County Domestic Violence Shelter. Some lucky Probation Officer went home with a gift card or basket that they won from our raffle.

However, we had noticed the attendance of our Gloucester County PANJ Local 108 Probation Officers declining and we wanted to bring the spirit of the holidays back into the office. In December 2011, the Gloucester County PANJ Local 108 Executive Board decided to host its **1st Annual Holiday Luncheon** at no cost to our Probation Officers. We spend so much time with our fellow Probation Officers during work hours that we have evolved into one BIG family welcoming anyone who transfers to Gloucester County or is newly hired.

We had a great turnout our 1st year and the number of attendees continues to grow. In December 2012, we agreed on getting parting gifts for our officers with our PANJ logo of Gloucester County PANJ Local 108. The gifts have included a drawstring book bag with a pen, notepad and pen set with post-its, and our most recent gift, acrylic insulated tumblers.

On 12/17/14, we celebrated with our wonderful co-workers again for our **4th Annual Holiday Luncheon**. The Gloucester County PANJ Local 108 Executive Board enjoys sharing the spirit of giving by providing lunch catered by one of our local restaurants. We also picked a program in Gloucester County that we could provide donations to those in need. This year, we collected gently used newborn/infant clothes, diapers, and wipes for **Mother Child Residential** located in Woodbury, NJ. Ms. Kelly Morris, Care Coordinator, came to share some information about what they do and to collect the generous donations we collected. We had the pleasure of PANJ 1st Vice President of Line Staff, Ellen Cribbin, attend our luncheon, who gave us a brief contract update. Having a luncheon at the office, gives all Probation Officers an opportunity to be merry with us without having to go out in the cold and enjoy the company of our co-workers. We hope more Probation Officers join us next year.

We hope that everyone had a Happy Holiday!



Patrick Flanagan

By Nick Briscuso, PANJ Local 113 President, Region II Rep, PIPC Chair

Just a few short days before Thanksgiving and in the middle of the PANJ-EF Training Conference, Monmouth Probation received the shocking and saddening news that one of our brothers, **Senior Probation Officer, Patrick Flanagan**, had passed away. He was loved by all for his extraordinarily generous nature and contagious laugh. Patrick was a loyal friend, devoted father and dedicated Officer.

PANJ Local 113 recently held a gathering at one of Patrick’s favorite places, the Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh in Belmar, to celebrate his life and work. We had a huge turnout of over 70 people. Plaques were presented to commemorate Patrick’s 20 plus years of service to the people of Monmouth County and the Probation profession; one for his family and one to hang in our office along with those of other Officers whom we have lost.

Patrick also served fiercely as a Union Shop Steward for Local 113 for many years, fighting for the rights of his fellow Officers. He is sorely missed, but will never be forgotten.

“Until we meet again Patrick, may God hold you in the palm of His hand”

SAVE THE DATE!!!



PANJ-EF Golf Outing
MAY 4th 2015 at 1pm
Mercer Oaks Golf Course

Details coming soon on...
www.panj.org

