



PRESIDENTIAL NEWSLETTER

ELECTION COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES RESULTS

by John Morton, Editor

PANJ conducted a mail ballot election during the month of November and on the 30th, the American Arbitration Association counted the ballots that were returned. The following individuals were elected to serve the Probation Association of New Jersey for the next three years:

President: George P. Christie
First Vice President: Peter Tortoreto
Second Vice President: Stephanie Hennessey
Northern Regional VP: Chris Nwankwo
Central Regional VP: Gavin Cummings
Southern Regional VP: Dwight Covalleskie
First VP, Supervisor's Unit: Samuel Richter
Second VP, Supervisor's Unit: Neil Elsasser
Treasurer, Ann Rizzi
Recording Secretary: Stuart Martensen
Financial Secretary: Susan Ormsby-Cuozzo
Sergeant-at-Arms: Kristie Drummond
Parliamentarian: Peter Savage

An appeal was submitted to the Election Committee regarding the Supervisory Unit Vice President positions. The committee considered this appeal and dismissed it. The results of the election stand.

BILL S-950 PASSES SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE

by George P. Christie

S-950 is a bill which, as most of you know, would make Probation Officers law enforcement, and it calls for training in a course approved by the Police Training Commission. The bill also provides for training and arming a minimum of two hundred Probation Officers statewide.

On November 29, 2001 the Senate Appropriations Committee moved the bill to the full Senate for a vote. This means that there is one step left before the bill goes to the Governor for signing. The Assembly version (A 1448) passed a floor vote on June 28, 2001.

Our legislators are finally beginning to understand the task of Probation Officers and how difficult and dangerous your work has truly become. Those of you who have taken the time to call or write to your Assemblymen, Assemblywomen, and Senators have helped this bill succeed thus far.

This legislation would make it possible for all Probation Officers to obtain the important training necessary to perform their tasks and provide the necessary tools as well. Probation Officers need the ability to respond to the full range of threats that they encounter, just as parole officers and US Probation Officers do now. This has been a bill that has been opposed by the Judiciary from its inception several years ago and they are still trying to have it tabled. I believe that the time has finally come for the Probation Officers to have their safety concerns resolved.

LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

A1448/S950

by

George P. Christie

At the present time we are attempting to get our bill (S-950) posted before the full Senate. The bill passed the Senate Appropriations Committee and has only this one remaining step before going to the Governor's desk. Acting Governor Donald DiFrancesco is also the Senate President and is the person who must put the bill up for a floor vote.

This bill would bring Probation Officers into the law enforcement community and provide for training in a program approved by the Police Training Commission. It would also call for the arming of a minimum of 200 Probation Officers after they receive appropriate training. The bill would allow Probation Officers to also obtain the necessary tools needed to perform their duties.

At the present time I would ask all of you to contact the Senator in your home district and ask for his or her support for S-950. You can also ask other people to make calls if they believe in this legislation.

While you are making these important calls I have already sent out a packet of information to all 40 State Senators explaining the importance of this legislation in terms of safety for our officers and for the law abiding public. Your caseloads have been on the increase, and the type of probationer you supervise has become more dangerous. In New Jersey the Federal Judges decided that our state is a dangerous place for Probation Officers and have permitted the Federal Probation Officers to carry a firearm. Our New Jersey Parole Officers are also armed because of the danger, and you deal with same clients and in the same neighborhoods. Also, in most other states Probation Officers are law enforcement officers and are armed. Our administration has simply neglected to see the state of the community corrections system and the shortcomings of that system. They have not responded to the fact that tens of thousands of probationers in New Jersey are missing only to be found when they are caught victimizing some unsuspecting citizen.

Thank you for your efforts and keep up the good work.

[Back to Top](#)

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