



Probation Association of New Jersey

Serving New Jersey Since 1904

An affiliate of the American Probation and Parole Association

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PRESIDENTIAL NEWSLETTER

By George Christie, President

September 14, 2005

PANJ ENDORSES JON CORZINE FOR GOVERNOR

PANJ has set an historic precedent by endorsing Jon Corzine for Governor. It should be noted that the PANJ Executive Board consisting of approximately 40 elected officials voted to endorse the senator under the PANJ Constitution and By-Laws on July 28, 2005. Both Doug Forrester and Senator Corzine were contacted in recent weeks by PANJ. The candidates were invited to respond to a series of issues critical to Probation Officers and Judicial Supervisors. Senator Corzine's response to our concerns made it clear that he deserves our support and vote on Election Day, November 8, 2005.

In our meeting at his Washington DC office, Senator Corzine indicated that he understands the complex and sometimes dangerous responsibilities of Probation Officers. He strongly supports the concept of enhancing community protection by updating and improving Probation Officer training.

Corzine is aware that providing effective community protection can place Probation Officers in potentially dangerous situations. If elected Corzine is committed to providing the resources required by Probation to fulfill its mission in the security conscious post 9/11 world.

Senator Corzine has supported the PANJ Federal legislative agenda since his election to the United States Senate in 2000. Corzine supports HR 484 which was introduced by New Jersey Congressman Bill Pascrell. This landmark legislation would establish a Probation and Parole Task Force within the US Department of Justice. When the Task Force convenes PANJ plans to advocate for required training in self defense and relevant law enforcement techniques.

Mr. Corzine recognizes that in addition to training and safety issues, Probation Officers have tremendous economic concerns about the future. He has pledged that his administration will be committed to pension protection. At a time when many of the state's politicians have made the pensions of dedicated state workers the scapegoat for budgetary shortfalls, Corzine clearly recognizes the necessity for reforming the pension system from the abuses of well-connected politicians without penalizing the economic security of the state's Probation Officers and other dedicated state workers.

PANJ urges all members to support the candidacy of Senator Jon Corzine. We believe that he will advance the PANJ legislative agenda that will elevate our profession, provide our citizens with enhanced community protection, and offer greater individual security.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
By Brad Fairchild
Southern Regional Vice President
Supervisory Unit

PANJ has been pursuing an active legislative agenda in Washington as well as the New Jersey's capital city of Trenton. The process of proposing major reforms is often painfully slow but progress has been made possible due to the advocacy and hard work of Probation Officers from across New Jersey.

Assembly Bill 3045, introduced by Assemblyman Francis Blee from Atlantic County, would authorize the transfer of Probation to the Department of Corrections. PANJ is expecting that the Assembly Judiciary Committee, chaired by Assemblywoman Linda Greenstein of Mercer County and a strong supporter of the transfer, will conduct hearings on the bill during the December "lame duck" session.

PANJ is happy to announce that Governor Codey signed recently approved legislation that would enable Union officials that are on a leave of absence, to continue receiving state health benefits. Additional legislation, sponsored by Senators Barbara Buono of Middlesex and Stephen Sweeney of Gloucester, would permit union officials to continue to receive pension credits while on leave of absence working for the Union.

The above mentioned legislation is critical to the future of our organization because many of our elected statewide officers could not afford to disrupt accumulating pension credits or receive a reduction in health care coverage while working full time for our members.

Earlier this year New Jersey Congressman William Pascrell introduced HR 484, also known as the Probation and Parole Safety Task Force Bill. The Task Force would be established in the US Department of Justice. The Federal legislation would mandate improved training in the areas of self defense and law enforcement techniques. The bill would also direct the Bureau of Justice Statistics to carry out comprehensive statistical reviews of the incidence and effects of violence against federal and state Probation Officers. PANJ President has been meeting with Congressmen and Senators during the last year and is seeking and receiving bi-partisan support.

The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) has become a valuable ally in the fight for a Federal Task Force. Through their WEB page (www.appa-net.org) APPA has urged members nationwide to call their Congressman in an all out effort to make this critical bill a reality.

PANJ strongly believes law enforcement training authorized by the Federal Task Force and the Probation Officer Community Safety Act, signed by Governor DiFrancesco in 2002 but not enforced thanks to litigation sponsored by the Judiciary, is in the best interests of all citizens of the Garden State. Community protection would be enhanced by law enforcement training which would shield individual citizens from potential attacks by criminal offenders who commit repeated and violent offenses.

Future updates of national and state legislation will be provided. PANJ members seeking additional information should contact George Christie at the PANJ office in Brielle.