



Probation Association of New Jersey

Serving New Jersey Since 1904

An affiliate of the American Probation and Parole Association

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PROBATION ASSOCIATION OF NJ CITES PUBLIC SAFETY IN SUIT TO STAY FURLOUGH RULES

*PANJ Also to File an Unfair Labor Practice Complaint
With the Public Employee Relations Council*

(TRENTON) – Most major New Jersey employee unions representing more than 150,000 public sector professionals today filed suit to stop the implementation of rules recently adopted by the Civil Service Commission that would allow for “temporary layoffs” of all state employees including critical public safety personnel. The last minute, orchestrated passage of the furlough rules did not allow for adequate public input or discussion of the potential impact on public safety, law enforcement, contract obligation and negotiations.

The Probation Association of New Jersey (PANJ) and the Fireman's Mutual Benevolent Association (FMBA) filed suit in the Superior Court Appellate Division against the State of New Jersey citing failure of the Commission to adequately demonstrate imminent peril in passing emergency rules. In addition, the Commission did not file proper and normal procedures for passing rules thereby overturning established rulemaking practices. The suit calls for an emergent stay of the rules.

George P. Christie, President of PANJ, said the Commission's quickly staged action showed that adoption of the rules were determined before the public had an opportunity to comment or ask questions about their livelihood.

“While the state representatives contend that we should have known this action was coming, there are processes and procedures put in place to respect the rights of the people of New Jersey to know and understand what elected and appointed officials are doing. We were not given even the courtesy of 24 hours notice alerting us to action that will take money out of the paychecks of public employees,” said Christie.

There are an estimated 2,800 probation officers, supervisors and professional employees in the Judiciary who will be affected by the so-called emergent layoff rule. PANJ has raised concerns over public safety on furlough days which would compromise in-office reporting days, community supervision of probationers and other critical functions performed by Judiciary personnel.

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Probation functions include adult and juvenile offender supervision, child support order enforcement, family court interaction, bail setting procedures and other critical court functions. All professionals represented by PANJ will have their rights and contracts seriously jeopardized by the new rule.

“We need time to ensure that these furlough days do not become a holiday for offenders,” Christie added. “The rules not only affect our personnel but they affect the ability to provide full and adequate public safety services to our communities. Such critical decisions should not happen in the blink of an eye without fully engaging the personnel and communities who are affected the most.”

PANJ also is filing an unfair labor practice against the Judiciary under the Public Employees Relations Commission. The complaint will contend that the Judiciary is violating law and contract rights by unilaterally imposing furlough days.

The Judiciary announced furlough days before emergency rules were adopted on any level. The union is seeking quick action on both cases since furlough days already have been slated for probation officers on May 22 and June 29.

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