

State House Strategies

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dwight Covalleskie
FROM: Rob Nixon
DATE: January 5, 2023
RE: ***Daniel's Law Update***

As you are aware, Senator Cryan had introduced legislation (S3125) to further amend Daniels Law. The bill was considered on December 15th in Committee and following your testimony and my conversations, the sponsor has agreed to work with PANJ on amendments that you testified to regarding including probation officers and supervisors. I am working on forwarding those follow up discussions now that Christmas break is behind us.

In addition, Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee Chairman Spearman has agreed to sponsor legislation to add probation officers to Daniel's Law at our request. The Assembly has been on recess since December 19th and does not return for action until January 12th for bills to be introduced. As soon as the bill is dropped I will let you know and we can work with Spearman on scheduling a hearing on it.

I will have further updates for you during the next week.



Probation Association of New Jersey

Serving New Jersey Since 1904

An affiliate of the American Probation and Parole Association

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PANJ Testimony to the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee Dwight Covalleskie, President PANJ December 15, 2022

Thank you, Chairman Vitale, and members of this Committee for allowing me to present testimony on behalf of the Probation Association of New Jersey (PANJ) regarding issues of importance to our membership.

My name is Dwight Covalleskie and I am the President of the Probation Association of New Jersey. PANJ, established over 100 years ago, represents approximately two thousand eight hundred Probation Officers and Supervisors. PANJ advocates, on behalf of its members; hard working men and women who have dedicated their lives to public service and have demanding jobs. We supervise persons sentenced to Probation in the criminal system, and ensure the safety of the public by enforcing the laws and mandates of the Courts. Our priority has always been and will always be the citizens of New Jersey.

New Jersey's Probation Officers and Supervisors oversee the 8th largest Probation system in the country according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2020). Probation Officers and Supervisors are on the frontlines in protecting our communities by fighting recidivism and helping offenders re-enter society as law-abiding citizens. Probation Officers, Supervisors and other represented titles work in Criminal, Pre Trial-Services and the Family Division within the Court system, providing many vital functions that deal with individuals under duress.

Probation Officers, Supervisors and related titles are not considered law enforcement in New Jersey, unlike 41 other states. Therefore, they are not currently protected by Daniel's Law.

While those in the courtroom, Judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officers are currently protected under Daniel's Law, PANJ members are not. We need to have these professionals protected as they make

recommendations to the court and can become targets of criminals or litigants. Protecting those individuals who protect and serve the citizens of New Jersey make sense. It will help ensure the privacy and security of these public servants who are not currently covered.

Making tough decisions is part of the job for these Officers and Supervisors. Many times, these decisions are not popular. Individuals who are involved in the court system can then target these officers and supervisors by showing up at their residence or finding their personal phone numbers exposing these officers and their families to unneeded harm.

In some instances, the Judiciary is not helpful in filing charges against individuals who threaten Probation Officers and Supervisors and then are required to use their home address.

Probation Officers and Supervisors are frequently threatened, and we ask for an amendment to the legislation to ensure that we don't have to wait for a tragedy to occur before Daniel's Law is amended to include them.