

2A: 4A-47
LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST
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(Juveniles--collection of fines)

NJSA: 2A:4A-47

LAW OF: 1995 CHAPTER: 281

BILL NO: ~~2208~~ S2208

SPONSOR(S): Sinagra and Ciesla

DATE INTRODUCED: June 26, 1995

COMMITTEE: ASSEMBLY ---

SENATE: Law & Public Safety

AMENDED DURING PASSAGE: No

DATE OF PASSAGE: ASSEMBLY: November 30, 1995

SENATE: October 19, 1995

DATE OF APPROVAL: December 15, 1995

FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE ATTACHED IF AVAILABLE:

SPONSOR STATEMENT: Yes

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: ASSEMBLY: No

SENATE: Yes

FISCAL NOTE: Yes

VETO MESSAGE: No

MESSAGE ON SIGNING: Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

REPORTS: Yes

HEARINGS: No

974.90 New Jersey. Governor's Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice.
J97 Final report...December 30, 1994. Trenton, 1994.
1994a

974.90 New Jersey. Legislature. Assembly. Task Force on Juvenile
J97 Crime.
1994 Task Force meetings, held 3-22-94, 4-12-94, 5-4-94 & 6-22-94,
Manalapan, Paterson, Vineland & Edison, NJ, 1994.

For newspaper clippings see Legislative History of 1995, C280.

974.90 New Jersey. Legislature. Senate. Law & Public Safety Committee.
J97 Committee meeting on...S2208, held 9-11-95, Trenton, 1995.

1995
KBG:pp

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1 AN ACT concerning juveniles and amending P.L.1982, c.77,
2 P.L.1979, c.396 and P.L.1991, c.329.

3

4 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the
5 State of New Jersey:

6 1. Section 28 of P.L.1982, c.77 (C.2A:4A-47) is amended to
7 read as follows:

8 28. a. Any order of disposition entered in a case under this act
9 shall terminate when the juvenile who is the subject of the order
10 attains the age of 18, or [1 year] 3 years from the date of the
11 order whichever is later unless such order involves incarceration
12 or is sooner terminated by its terms or by order of the court.

13 b. Any agency providing services pursuant to any court ordered
14 disposition shall give prior notice to the court at least 30 days
15 before terminating these services which notice shall include the
16 date of intended termination.

17 c. Upon termination of an order of disposition, maximum term,
18 parole or community supervision the court shall enter an order
19 requiring payment of any amounts owed by the juvenile or the
20 parent or guardian of the juvenile pursuant to the court ordered
21 disposition and shall file a copy of the order with the Clerk of the
22 Superior Court who shall enter the following information upon the
23 record of docketed judgments;

24 (1) the name of the juvenile or the juvenile's parent or
25 guardian as judgment debtor;

26 (2) the amount of the assessment imposed pursuant to section 2
27 of P.L.1979, c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1) and the Violent Crimes
28 Compensation Board as a judgment creditor in that amount;

29 (3) the amount of any restitution ordered and the name of any
30 person entitled to receive payment as judgment creditors in the
31 amount and according to the priority set by the court;

32 (4) the amount of any fine and the governmental entity entitled
33 to receive payment pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1979, c.396
34 (C.2C:46-4.)

35 (5) the amount of the mandatory Drug Enforcement and
36 Demand Reduction penalty imposed;

37 (6) the amount of the forensic laboratory fee imposed; and

38 (7) the date of the order.

39 Where there is more than one judgment creditor the creditors
40 shall be given priority consistent with the provisions of section 13
41 of P.L.1991, c.329 (C.2C:46-4.1). These entries shall have the
42 same force as a civil judgment docketed in the Superior Court.

43 (cf: P.L.1982, c.77, s.28)

EXPLANATION--Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the
above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 2. Section 3 of P.L.1979, c.396 (C.2C:46-4) is amended to read
2 as follows:

3 3. a. All fines, assessments imposed pursuant to section 2 of
4 P.L.1979, c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1) and restitution shall be collected as
5 follows:

6 (1) All fines, assessments imposed pursuant to section 2 of
7 P.L.1979, c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1) and restitution imposed by the
8 Superior Court or otherwise imposed at the county level, shall be
9 collected by the county probation [department] division except
10 when such fine, assessment or restitution is imposed in
11 conjunction with a custodial sentence to a State correctional
12 facility or in conjunction with a term of incarceration imposed
13 pursuant to section 25 of P.L.1982, c.7 (C.2A:4A-44) in which
14 event such fine, assessment or restitution shall be collected by
15 the Department of Corrections or the Juvenile Justice
16 Commission established pursuant to section 2 of P.L. c.
17 (C.) (now pending before the Legislature as section 2 of
18 Assembly Bill No. of 1995 and Senate Bill No. of 1995). An
19 adult prisoner of a State correctional institution or a juvenile
20 serving a term of incarceration imposed pursuant to section 25 of
21 P.L.1982, c.77 (C.2A:4A-44) who has not paid an assessment
22 imposed pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1979, c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1) or
23 restitution shall have the assessment or restitution deducted from
24 any income the inmate receives as a result of labor performed at
25 the institution or on any type of work release program or,
26 pursuant to regulations promulgated by the Commissioner of the
27 Department of Corrections or the Juvenile Justice Commission,
28 from any personal account established in the institution for the
29 benefit of the inmate.

30 (2) All fines, assessments imposed pursuant to section 2 of
31 P.L.1979, c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1) and restitution imposed by a
32 municipal court shall be collected by the municipal court clerk
33 except if such fine, assessments imposed pursuant to section 2 of
34 P.L.1979, c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1), or restitution is ordered as a
35 condition of probation in which event it shall be collected by the
36 county probation [department] division.

37 b. Except as provided in subsection c. with respect to fines
38 imposed on appeals following convictions in municipal courts, all
39 fines imposed by the Superior Court or otherwise imposed at the
40 county level, shall be paid over by the officer entitled to collect
41 same to:

42 (1) The county treasurer with respect to fines imposed on
43 defendants who are sentenced to and serve a custodial term,
44 including a term as a condition of probation, in the county jail,
45 workhouse or penitentiary except where such county sentence is
46 served concurrently with a sentence to a State institution; or

47 (2) The State Treasurer with respect to all other fines.

48 c. All fines imposed by municipal courts on defendants
49 convicted of crimes, disorderly persons offenses and petty
50 disorderly persons offenses, and all fines imposed following
51 conviction on appeal therefrom, and all forfeitures of bail shall
52 be paid over by the officer entitled to collect same to the
53 treasury of the municipality wherein the municipal court is
54 located.

1 In the case of an intermunicipal court, fines shall be paid into
2 the municipal treasury of the municipality in which the offense
3 was committed, and costs, fees, and forfeitures of bail shall be
4 apportioned among the several municipalities to which the
5 court's jurisdiction extends according to the ratios of the
6 municipalities' contributions to the total expense of maintaining
7 the court.

8 d. All assessments imposed pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1979,
9 c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1) shall be forwarded and deposited as provided
10 in that section.

11 e. All mandatory Drug Enforcement and Demand Reduction
12 penalties imposed pursuant to N.J.S.2C:35-15 shall be forwarded
13 and deposited as provided for in that section.

14 f. All forensic laboratory fees assessed pursuant to
15 N.J.S.2C:35-20 shall be forwarded and deposited as provided for
16 in that section.

17 g. All restitution ordered to be paid to the Violent Crimes
18 Compensation Board pursuant to N.J.S.2C:44-2 shall be
19 forwarded to the Board for deposit in the Violent Crimes
20 Compensation Board Account.

21 h. All assessments imposed pursuant to section 11 of P.L.1993,
22 c.220 (C.2C:43-3.2) shall be forwarded and deposited as provided
23 in that section.

24 (cf: P.L.1993, c.220, s.12)

25 3. Section 13 of P.L.1991, c.329 (C.2C:46-4.1) is amended to
26 read as follows:

27 13. Moneys that are collected in satisfaction of any
28 assessment imposed pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1979, c.396
29 (C.2C:43-3.1), or in satisfaction of restitution or fines imposed in
30 accordance with the provisions of Title 2C of the New Jersey
31 Statutes or with the provisions of section 24 of P.L.1982, c.77
32 (C.2A:4A-43), shall be applied in the following order:

33 a. first, in satisfaction of all assessments imposed pursuant to
34 section 2 of P.L.1979, c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1);

35 b. second, in satisfaction of any restitution ordered;

36 c. third, in satisfaction of all assessments imposed pursuant to
37 section 11 of P.L.1993, c.220 (C.2C:43-3.2);

38 d. fourth, in satisfaction of any forensic laboratory fee
39 assessed pursuant to N.J.S.2C:35-20;

40 e. fifth, in satisfaction of any mandatory Drug Enforcement
41 and Demand Reduction penalty assessed pursuant to
42 N.J.S.2C:35-15; and

43 f. sixth, in satisfaction of any fine.

44 (cf: P.L.1993, c.220, s.13)

45 4. Section 19 of P.L.1991, c.329 (C.52:4B-8.1.) is amended to
46 read as follows:

47 19. a. Within 180 days of the effective date of this act, the
48 Violent Crimes Compensation Board, after consultation with the
49 Attorney General, the Department of Corrections, and the
50 Administrative Office of the Courts, on behalf of the county
51 probation [departments] divisions and the municipal court clerks,
52 shall develop a uniform system for recording all information
53 necessary to ensure proper identification, tracking, collection and
54 disposition of moneys owed for:

1 (1) assessments imposed pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1979,
2 c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1);

3 (2) fines and restitutions imposed in accordance with
4 provisions of Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes;

5 (3) fees imposed pursuant to N.J.S.2C:35-20;

6 (4) penalties imposed pursuant to N.J.S.2C:35-15.

7 b. The Violent Crimes Compensation Board shall use the
8 moneys deposited in the Criminal Disposition and Revenue
9 Collection Fund to defray the costs incurred by the board in
10 developing, implementing, operating and improving the board's
11 component of the uniform system for tracking and collecting
12 revenues described in subsection a. of this section.

13 c. The Juvenile Justice Commission established pursuant to
14 section 2 of P.L. c. (C.) (now pending before the Legislature
15 as section 2 of Assembly Bill No. of 1995 and Senate Bill
16 No. of 1995) the, Department of Corrections, and the
17 Administrative Office of the Courts, on behalf of the county
18 probation [departments] divisions and the municipal court clerks,
19 shall file such reports with the Violent Crimes Compensation
20 Board as required for the operation of the uniform system
21 described in subsection a. of this section.

22 d. The Violent Crimes Compensation Board shall report
23 annually to the Governor, the Attorney General, the
24 Administrative Director of the Administrative Office of the
25 Courts, the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, the
26 Juvenile Justice Commission and the Legislature on the
27 development, implementation, improvement and effectiveness of
28 the uniform system and on moneys received, deposited and
29 identified as receivable.

30 (cf: P.L.1992, c.169, s.4)

31 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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36 This bill is part of the package of bills concerning the
37 Governor's initiative on juvenile justice reform. This bill would
38 amend various sections of the law to clarify collection procedures
39 for fines, assessments or restitutions owed by the juvenile or the
40 juvenile's parent or guardian as a result of any court ordered
41 disposition.

42 This bill would amend N.J.S.A.2A:4A-47 to require the court,
43 upon the termination of an order of disposition, maximum term
44 or community supervision, to enter an order requiring payment of
45 any fines, assessments or restitution owed by the juvenile or the
46 juvenile's parent or guardian. This order would be filed with the
47 Clerk of the Superior Court and would have the same force as a
48 docketed civil judgment.

49 N.J.S.A. 2C:46-4 and 2C:46-4.1 would also be amended to
50 clarify that all fines, assessments or restitution imposed on a
51 juvenile shall be collected by the Juvenile Justice Commission
52 which would be established by another bill in this package of bills.

53 In addition, this bill would amend N.J.S.A. 52:4B-8.1,
54 concerning the Violent Crimes Compensation Board's uniform

1 tracking system to require the Juvenile Justice Commission to
2 file reports with the VCCB.

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7 Clarifies procedures for the collection of fines, assessments or
8 restitution from juveniles; incorporates references to the
9 Juvenile Justice Commission.

1 (1) assessments imposed pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1979,
2 c.396 (C.2C:43-3.1);

3 (2) fines and restitutions imposed in accordance with
4 provisions of Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes;

5 (3) fees imposed pursuant to N.J.S.2C:35-20;

6 (4) penalties imposed pursuant to N.J.S.2C:35-15.

7 b. The Violent Crimes Compensation Board shall use the
8 moneys deposited in the Criminal Disposition and Revenue
9 Collection Fund to defray the costs incurred by the board in
10 developing, implementing, operating and improving the board's
11 component of the uniform system for tracking and collecting
12 revenues described in subsection a. of this section.

13 c. The Juvenile Justice Commission established pursuant to
14 section 2 of P.L. c. (C.)(now pending before the Legislature
15 as section 2 of Assembly Bill No. of 1995 and Senate Bill
16 No. of 1995) the, Department of Corrections, and the
17 Administrative Office of the Courts, on behalf of the county
18 probation [departments] divisions and the municipal court clerks,
19 shall file such reports with the Violent Crimes Compensation
20 Board as required for the operation of the uniform system
21 described in subsection a. of this section.

22 d. The Violent Crimes Compensation Board shall report
23 annually to the Governor, the Attorney General, the
24 Administrative Director of the Administrative Office of the
25 Courts, the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, the
26 Juvenile Justice Commission and the Legislature on the
27 development, implementation, improvement and effectiveness of
28 the uniform system and on moneys received, deposited and
29 identified as receivable.

30 (cf: P.L.1992, c.169, s.4)

31 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

32
33
34 STATEMENT

35
36 This bill is part of the package of bills concerning the
37 Governor's initiative on juvenile justice reform. This bill would
38 amend various sections of the law to clarify collection procedures
39 for fines, assessments or restitutions owed by the juvenile or the
40 juvenile's parent or guardian as a result of any court ordered
41 disposition.

42 This bill would amend N.J.S.A.2A:4A-47 to require the court,
43 upon the termination of an order of disposition, maximum term
44 or community supervision, to enter an order requiring payment of
45 any fines, assessments or restitution owed by the juvenile or the
46 juvenile's parent or guardian. This order would be filed with the
47 Clerk of the Superior Court and would have the same force as a
48 docketed civil judgment.

49 N.J.S.A. 2C:46-4 and 2C:46-4.1 would also be amended to
50 clarify that all fines, assessments or restitution imposed on a
51 juvenile shall be collected by the Juvenile Justice Commission
52 which would be established by another bill in this package of bills.

53 In addition, this bill would amend N.J.S.A. 52:4B-8.1,
54 concerning the Violent Crimes Compensation Board's uniform

1 tracking system to require the Juvenile Justice Commission to
2 file reports with the VCCB.

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7 Clarifies procedures for the collection of fines, assessments or
8 restitution from juveniles; incorporates references to the
9 Juvenile Justice Commission.

SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 2208

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 11, 1995

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 2208.

This bill is part of the package of bills concerning the Governor's initiative on juvenile justice reform. This bill would amend various sections of the law to clarify collection procedures for fines, assessments or restitutions owed by a juvenile or the juvenile's parent or guardian as a result of any court ordered disposition.

This bill would amend N.J.S.A.2A:4A-47 to require the court, upon the termination of an order of disposition, maximum term or community supervision, to enter an order requiring payment of any fines, assessments or restitution owed by a juvenile or the juvenile's parent or guardian. This order would be filed with the Clerk of the Superior Court and would have the same force as a docketed civil judgment.

N.J.S.A.2C:46-4 and 2C:46-4.1 would also be amended to clarify that all fines, assessments or restitution imposed on a juvenile would be collected by the Juvenile Justice Commission established by another bill in this package of bills.

In addition, this bill would amend N.J.S.A.52:4B-8.1, concerning the Violent Crimes Compensation Board's (VCCB) uniform tracking system, to require the Juvenile Justice Commission to file reports with the VCCB.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE TO

SENATE, No. 2208

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: September 26, 1995

Senate Bill No. 2208 of 1995 amends various sections of the law to clarify collection procedures for fines, assessments or restitution owed by juvenile offenders pursuant to a court-ordered disposition. It also extends the maximum term for juvenile dispositions not involving incarceration. Under current law, such dispositions terminate when the juvenile reaches the age of 18, or one year from the date of the order, whichever is later. The bill increases the maximum disposition to the age of 18 or three years from the date of the order, whichever is later. The bill also requires the court, upon termination of an order of disposition, maximum term, or community supervision, to enter an order requiring payment of any fines or assessments owed by the juvenile or the juvenile's parent or legal guardian. The bill also establishes the Juvenile Justice Commission, created by a companion bill (S-2211), as the collecting agency for juvenile fines and assessments together with the Department of Corrections.

The Department of Law and Public Safety informally estimates that enactment of this bill would have a minimal additional fiscal impact. The department notes that by extending the maximum term for a disposition not involving incarceration the bill would result in longer terms of probation for older offenders, thereby increasing the workload for probation officers. The Department asserts that this change would not immediately increase the number of juveniles on probation. The department anticipates that existing resources and probation staff would be able to absorb these workload increases.

However, OLS notes that the bill does not specify that the extension of probation will apply only to future dispositions. If average caseloads remain constant, additional probation officers will be needed under this bill. In fiscal year 1994, there were 12,872 juveniles on probation. Information regarding the age of these juveniles, which would be necessary to estimate the increased probation workload, was not readily available.

The department states that this bill codifies the Judiciary's current practice regarding the reduction of unpaid fines, penalties and restitution to a judgement. When a disposition terminates and a juvenile has been unable to complete payment of his or her financial obligations, the outstanding balance is reduced to a civil judgment. The department estimates that this change may improve collections in future years by an indeterminable amount. In addition, information provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts indicates that enactment of this bill would also increase revenue collections from juvenile offenders since the bill would docket judgements in a more aggressive, uniform manner. However, data are not readily available to project the amount of such increased collections.

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concurs with these estimates.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.

1/14/95
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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR NEWS RELEASE

CN-001

CONTACT: Jayne Rebovich
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TRENTON, NJ 08625

RELEASE: Dec. 15, 1995

Gov. Christie Whitman today signed into law an overhaul of the juvenile justice system which promotes public safety, makes juveniles more accountable for their actions, and emphasizes prevention and early intervention.

The five-bill package of legislation creates a single agency to coordinate efforts to control juvenile crime, establishes a grant program to fund community-based programs and provides a continuum of responses to juvenile crime --from prevention and early intervention through incarceration, treatment and aftercare.

"This legislation gives the people of New Jersey a juvenile justice system that protects them from youths who commit crime and expect to get away with it because of their age," said Gov. Whitman. "We will hold them accountable for their actions, but we will also help them find a better way."

"The bills provide meaningful sentencing options for judges and true consequences for juvenile delinquents and their parents," she said.

Responding to an alarming increase in juvenile crime, Gov. Whitman established the Governor's Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice shortly after taking office in 1994 to find ways to improve and restructure the juvenile justice system. The legislation signed today implements the recommendations of the Council.

"The latest statistics show that violent crime committed by juveniles is increasing at a dramatic rate, with over 90,000 juveniles arrested in this state last year," said Gov. Whitman. "In 1994, 28 percent of all persons arrested for serious violent crimes were juveniles. These numbers clearly tell us that the time to act is now."

Attorney General Deborah T. Poritz, who chaired the Advisory Council stressed, "While this state is not alone in facing an increasingly serious juvenile crime problem,

S-2205/A-2991, sponsored by Senators Peter Inverso (R-Mercer/Middlesex) and Robert Singer (R-Burlington, Monmouth/Ocean) and Assemblymen Gary Stuhltrager (R-Salem/Cumberland/Gloucester) and Thomas Smith (R-Monmouth), amends the Juvenile Code to explicitly recognize accountability and public safety, along with rehabilitation, as key goals of the juvenile justice system. It also requires courts to consider the goals of accountability and public safety when determining whether to incarcerate a juvenile who has been adjudicated delinquent.

The bill also requires each term of incarceration to be followed by a term of community supervision up to one-third of the incarceration term ordered. This ensures that incarcerated juveniles who complete their term of incarceration, or "max out" and would otherwise receive no supervision on parole, will be supervised upon release.

This new law provides for greater parental responsibility by allowing family courts to order parents who fail to exercise reasonable supervision and control over juveniles who commit delinquent acts, to pay restitution. Current law limits parental restitution to juvenile auto theft cases.

Under current law, there is no way to hold a juvenile near the age of 18 accountable, other than imposing a term of incarceration, because a juvenile disposition terminates when the juvenile reaches the age of 18 or 1 year after the order, whichever is later. **S-2208/A-2992**, sponsored by Senators Jack Sinagra (R-Middlesex) and Andrew Ciesla (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and Assemblymen John Gibson (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland) and Nicholas Asselta (R-Cape May/Atlantic/Cumberland), extends one year limitation on non-custodial dispositions to three years after the issuance of the order.

The bill also makes it clear that a juvenile who has been ordered to pay a fine or restitution is not absolved of the obligation when the order of disposition is terminated. A judgment for the amount owed will be docketed upon termination of the order and would have the same effect as a civil judgment.

"With these new laws I believe we will reduce juvenile delinquency and make living and working in New Jersey a safer proposition, said Gov. Whitman. "We will do this town by town, neighborhood by neighborhood, child by child."

with the signing of this legislation, New Jersey takes the forefront in addressing the problem."

"Gov. Whitman's commitment to juveniles and to public safety has driven the revamping of the juvenile services system being signed into law today. I am proud of the role my department has played in these efforts and look forward to working as a member of the executive board of the Juvenile Justice Commission to provide services to juveniles that will make a difference for them and for all of New Jersey," said Human Services Commissioner William Waldman, vice-chair of the Advisory Council.

For the first time, responsibility for juvenile correctional programs and other youth programs will be centralized in one agency. **S-2211/A-2988**, sponsored by Senators Louis Kosco (R-Bergen) and John Bennett (R-Monmouth) and Assemblywoman Rose Heck (R-Bergen) and Assemblyman Lee Solomon (R-Camden), creates the Juvenile Justice Commission in, but not of, the Department of Law and Public Safety. Currently, three state departments, Human Services, Corrections and Law and Public Safety each have a role in juvenile justice issues.

"Consolidating responsibility for all juvenile programs in the Commission is sensible, cost-effective, and treats the problem of juvenile crime with the seriousness that the public deserves and the problems demand," said Gov. Whitman.

"The Juvenile Justice Commission offers a real solution to problems that have been talked about for years," said Corrections Commissioner William H. Fauver, a member of the new panel. "The Corrections Department is looking forward to a long and successful partnership with the Commission aimed at keeping New Jersey's communities safe while giving troubled kids the help they need."

A grant program will provide funding for locally created juvenile services and sanctions, including prevention and early intervention, sanctions short of incarceration, and post-incarceration supervision for those who do serve time. The State/Community Partnership Grant program is created by **S-2210/A-2989**, sponsored by Senators William Gormley (R-Atlantic) and Andrew Ciesla (R-Monmouth/Ocean) and Assemblyman Paul Kramer (R-Mercer/Middlesex) and Assemblywoman Barbara Wright (R-Mercer/Middlesex). The FY 1996 budget allocates \$7 million for this program.

The partnership grants will be administered by county youth services commissions authorized by **S-2209/A-2990**, sponsored by Senators Louis Bassano (R-Essex/Union) and John Matheussen (R-Camden/Gloucester) and Assemblymen Christopher "Kip" Bateman (R-Morris/Somerset) and Patrick Roma (R-Bergen). Additionally, the county commissions will assess and prioritize the needs of youth involved or at risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system, develop and implement community programs for juveniles, and review and monitor existing programs to determine their effectiveness.

**REMARKS OF GOVERNOR CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN
JUVENILE JUSTICE BILL SIGNING
STATE HOUSE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1995**

I would like to thank everyone for coming.

We know that children are the hope for our future and deserve our care.

At the same time, we know that we have lost too many children to crime, cheating everyone of the future we all could have and enjoy.

We also know that violent juvenile crime continues to rise in New Jersey and around the country. The most recent available statistics indicate that one in every six alleged killers and one in every three accused rapists is 17 or younger.

And yet, the juvenile justice system on which we rely both to protect us and to turn troubled and troubling youngsters around has itself been breaking down for years. For too long, our juvenile justice system has been ill-equipped to meet the growing problems.

New Jersey needs a juvenile justice system that will accomplish several important goals:

It should promote and protect the public's safety and security;

It should reduce juvenile delinquency;

It should turn troubled youth away from a road that will only lead to further trouble;

And it should hold juvenile offenders accountable for their actions.

In my first weeks as Governor, I saw first-hand how our uncoordinated approach to dealing with youthful offenders was getting the best of us. We simply weren't intervening early or effectively enough to steer troubled youngsters away from crime-ridden lives.

Reforming juvenile justice became for me more than just another policy initiative. I saw it as a critical mission to save our future. A future where law-abiding citizens feel safe and secure in their homes and neighborhoods. A future toward which every child could look with hope.

That is why I immediately formed the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council and charged its members with the task of overhauling the entire system. That is also why I called upon the Legislature, the clergy, educators, judges, prosecutors, counselors, police officers, detention officers, and citizens from every walk of life to join us on this mission.

I don't think I've ever seen so many people mobilize so quickly and work together so well. There have been no turf battles. There has been no partisanship or petty squabbling. Instead, everyone has put children and public safety first.

Thanks to this spirit of partnership, I can stand here and pronounce that our mission officially begins today.

The package of legislation I am about to sign will create an efficient, unified juvenile justice system that promotes prevention and early intervention while answering the public demand for accountability.

The first order of business is to get our own house in order. Today, we establish a single Juvenile Justice Commission that will bring together all the elements of juvenile justice in one unit, with one voice, and one central mission -- to deal effectively with juveniles who have either broken the law or are at risk of committing crimes.

While the Juvenile Justice Commission will provide the coordination and administer the resources, our reforms recognize that those closest to the problems in communities have a better take on what's needed to solve those problems.

That is why we are creating the State/Community Partnership Grant Program. It's a state block grant approach that supports local efforts to fight juvenile crime and deal with youthful offenders.

Our reforms authorize county-level Youth Services Commissions to administer the partnership grants.

These commissions will bring together key decision makers in the juvenile justice system with citizens who care. As partners, they will create local solutions to local problems.

The beauty of this whole structure is that you will have one coordinated state entity working in partnership with county and local governments. The assistance will flow from Trenton, but the solutions will come from the local level. Having chaired the Somerset County Youth Services Commission, I can attest that this approach works.

I also know from experience that partnerships work. As I remarked a moment ago, juvenile justice reform will succeed in New Jersey as long as we all stick together and keep our focus on our children and public safety.

We have come far in a short time already.

We are making changes that will give the people of New Jersey a juvenile justice system that protects them from youths who commit crime and expect to get away with it because of their age.

And we must also make sure young people know, that while we will hold them accountable for their actions, we are also willing to help them find a better way.

But we're a long way from being able to say, "Mission accomplished." The juvenile justice system suffered from years of neglect. While we've begun to straighten out the system, I am not so naive to predict that juvenile crime will drop precipitously overnight. We have to give our reforms time to produce the results we're seeking.

We also have to give children more of our time. Because when all is said and done, every citizen has to be part of the solution. We need to remind ourselves: How much time do we as parents spend talking to our kids and listening to them? How many activities do we share with them? How much does it take for a teacher in the classroom, the cop on the beat, the good neighbor next door, to take a kid under their wing and make a positive difference in that child's life?

If we give the time, we can prevent a lot of crime.

Before I sign this legislation, I want to thank all the bill sponsors and their colleagues in the Legislature, my staff, and my Cabinet for engineering a complete overhaul of our juvenile justice system. I want to particularly thank Attorney General Poritz, Commissioners Waldman and Fauver, Policy Advisor Bruce Stout, and every member of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Commission for taking a vision and making it real. You all have lived up to the highest ideals of public service.

Now, I will sign the legislation.