IT'S TIME TO REPAIR NEW JERSEY'S PAROLE SYSTEM

WHY NEW JERSEY MUST PASS A5311/S4492

The purpose of parole is to help facilitate re-entry, not continue to penalize and punish those who have already served their time. But our current parole system subjects people – especially those in recovery – to lengthy incarceration for non-criminal technical parole violations. The length of prison sanctions for these violations is way out of step with most states and makes it difficult for those attempting to rebuild their lives to productively readjust to freedom.

The Substance Abuse Recovery and Accountability Act (A5311/S4492) will modernize New Jersey's supervision system and improve outcomes for the state's nearly 16,000 people on parole while balancing public safety with supervision best practices.

WHAT A5311/S4492 DOES

- **Prioritizes treatment over incarceration for addiction.** Limits reincarceration when someone on parole relapses and empowers officers to connect people to community-based treatment rather than incarceration.
- **Incentivizes and rewards success.** Requires parole officers to recommend early discharge after two to five years for fully compliant individuals who pose no public safety risk.
- **Caps incarceration for non-criminal violations.** Caps reincarceration for non-criminal violations at 364 days and expands the option for shorter-term jail sanctions – more in line with the practice in most other states. People may serve that time in county jail instead of state prison, keeping them closer to family and support systems.
- **Protects basic rights at revocation.** Ensures any arrest warrant for a revocation is reviewed within seven days, guarantees access to the evidence before a hearing, and requires the Parole Board to consider holistic factors when determining the appropriate response to violations.
- **Gives officers more tools.** Expands the supervision toolkit, including direct referrals to treatment and the authority to recommend early discharge, so officers can hold people accountable without defaulting to incarceration.
- **Excludes serious cases.** People convicted of sex offenses and those serving terms under the No Early Release Act are not eligible for expedited early discharge.

WHY PASSING A5311/S449S IS IMPORTANT

More than 70% of people in New Jersey prisons struggle with substance use disorder, and many keep fighting that battle when they return home on supervision. Today, a single relapse can mean reincarceration for months at a time, treatment denial, job separation, and housing disruption. Addiction should be met with support, not a prison cell.

Passing this legislation is a critical move toward repairing New Jersey's parole system while advancing public safety, reducing unnecessary incarceration, strengthening reentry outcomes, and using taxpayer dollars responsibly.

FIND OUT MORE AT ACLU-NJ.ORG.

ACLU NJ