



State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
125 WEST STATE STREET
PO BOX 001
TRENTON NJ 08625-0001

JON S. CORZINE
Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 10, 2007

Press Office: 609-777-2600

GOVERNOR OUTLINES CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY

Phase II Focuses on Youth Crime, Delinquency and Gang Participation

NEWARK – Governor Jon S. Corzine today outlined the second phase of his three part plan to combat crime and create safer streets and neighborhoods throughout New Jersey. This component of the strategy focuses on providing positive alternatives and intervention to prevent juvenile delinquency and gang involvement before it becomes a problem.

“Today, we are unveiling a comprehensive approach to preventing kids from falling into the trap of a life of crime,” said Governor Corzine. “While law enforcement and re-entry are crucial aspects of crime-fighting, the prevention plan focuses on children and on the social underpinnings that can both prevent crime and lead to a fruitful life.

“This strategy spans several relevant state agencies and all aspects of child’s life: from ensuring a stable home environment to curricular and extra-curricular programs to opportunities for growth and training.”

By the time a young person has interacted with law enforcement, prime opportunities for prevention and intervention have already passed. Effective programs aimed at reducing risk factors of delinquency for at-risk youth – before they commit crime or an act of violence –shape the foundation of the prevention plan. This strategy recognizes that law enforcement is but one part of the comprehensive approach and identifies five action areas of intervention that will improve targeting of at risk youth and delivery of proven programs to lessen risk factors associated with problem behavior. These action areas include coordination of state level prevention efforts; facilitation and encouragement of local planning in implementation of prevention strategies; opportunities for jobs and training for at-risk youth; use of evidence-based primary prevention programs and targeted outreach to maximize participation and evaluation and assessment of prevention programs.

"We can't arrest our way out of the problem of violent street gangs and gun violence," Attorney General Anne Milgram said. "That is why proven and evidence-based prevention

programs aimed at keeping kids in school and in safe places like the Boys and Girls Club after school are so important. We must make kids at risk more resilient to the pressures of gangs, and we will."

"As we all know, jail alone is not the most effective way to combat crime. Prevention is a key component in the Governor's overall strategy. Parents, coaches, teachers, mentors - we all need to be an integral part of this plan. Each of us has the ability to impact the lives of young people before they get sucked in by the siren calls of the street," said Senate President Richard J. Codey.

Too often, departments have conducted their own delinquency prevention initiatives with little or no coordination with other state offices. This new overarching prevention strategy provides for greater coordination of programs among multi-state agencies, including the appointment of a Director of Prevention Strategies to ensure that coordination. Participating agencies have dedicated more than \$35.6 million to fund and implement these collaborative efforts. To ensure fiscal responsibility and efficiency, a Prevention Funding Guide and consolidation of grants management will also be employed.

Local and county agencies will also be responsible for the implementation of these strategies, creating key linkages at the state, county and municipal levels of government. The State will support municipal delinquency programs as well as create a Community Resource Tool Kit that provides comprehensive information of local, state and federal programs. Additionally, the State's Family Success Centers, designed to prevent delinquency or intervene with at-risk youth, will be enhanced. To assist with further development, implementation and evaluation, the State will provide funding for a minimum of 12 Community Justice Coordinators.

"To prevent juvenile crime, we need to keep New Jersey's children safe, healthy, and off the streets. We're working together at the local, state, and federal levels to give our children real opportunities and alternatives to turning to gangs and crime. Even as the President tries to cut funding for critical juvenile crime prevention programs, we will keep fighting to fund after school, anti-drug, and anti-violence programs," said Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ).

The plan also advocates jobs and training for at-risk youth, determining that young people with no access to education, training or employment are likely to engage in delinquent behavior. By providing and encouraging education and work, youth will be guided to a pathway to employment and brighter opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives.

This strategy also supports funding and implementation of best practices and Model Programs in communities to improve outcomes for court-involved youth. These include availability of programs through Family Success Centers as well as model intervention programs to redirect youth before crimes are committed. To combat truancy, a major risk factor of delinquency, a Truancy Reduction Pilot Program will be developed.

“We owe it to our families, friends and neighbors to protect them from violence by doing everything we can to prevent it. That’s why all of us who are here today have worked together to improve education, to create jobs, to stir in our cities a culture of hope,” said Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), who authored anti-gang legislation in the U.S. Senate and was successful last week in doubling funding for the federal Juvenile Mentoring Program. “With the new initiatives put forward today, we are telling our young people that there is a better path, we are telling communities ravaged by gangs that help is on the way, and we are telling the Bush Administration that we will not let security on the streets of Baghdad come at the expense of security right here on the streets we call home.”

Lastly, the prevention plan will seek to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of its programs by restructuring the statistical analysis center to ensure baseline measures are collected and tracked as well as development of an evaluation and benchmarking component for ongoing analysis of implementation and outcomes of prevention recommendations.

The Governor’s crime strategy takes a comprehensive approach, addressing issues of enforcement, prevention and re-entry with an emphasis on gang violence and recidivism. The strategy follows several fundamental principles. First, every component will use data and analysis to both identify problems and eliminate them. Second, the state will serve in a support role to help identify problems and assist communities in applying appropriate solutions. Third, involved parties must communicate fully with one another in the development, delivery and assessment of anti-gang and anti-gun strategies. Finally, all programs will be critically evaluated through data driven analysis and adjusted appropriately to ensure maximum effectiveness. This prevention component of the Governor’s strategy will help to reduce youth crime, delinquency and gang activity.

The tactics will be increasingly effective when implemented along side the initiatives outlined in the recent enforcement plan presented on Tuesday and the upcoming re-entry initiatives to be introduced tomorrow by Governor Corzine.

###