



NEWS RELEASE



STATE OF NEW JERSEY State Parole Board

Phillip D. Murphy, Governor
Sheila Y. Oliver, Lt. Governor
Samuel J. Plumeri, Jr., Chairman

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For Immediate Release

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N.J. STATE PAROLE BOARD SERGEANT RECOGNIZED BY U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL AT AWARDS CEREMONY IN D.C.

State Parole Sergeant Matthew Testa Among Six Officers Honored for His Participation with Newark Violent Crime Initiative

TRENTON, NJ— New Jersey State Parole Board Sergeant Matthew Testa was one of several New Jersey law enforcement professionals recognized by U.S. Attorney General William Barr at the 67th Annual Attorney General Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C. The Newark Violent Crime Initiative (VCI) is a community-wide cooperative law enforcement effort aimed at combatting violent crime in and around Newark. Sgt. Testa serves as a member of the VCI.



The VCI unit received the William French Smith Award for its law enforcement members' contributions and achievements during this past year. They were recognized for their collaborative approach toward improving public safety and quality of life for Newark residents.

“The New Jersey State Parole Board is proud to be a part of this partnership,” said Chairman Samuel J. Plumeri, Jr. “These dedicated law enforcement professionals have reduced violent crime by 15% within the greater Newark area. Congratulations to Sergeant Testa, and his fellow recipients on a job well done.”

Sergeant Testa said, “It was a great honor to be recognized by the United States Attorney General’s Office. The Violent Crime Initiative is a very successful, and important program that benefits the residents of Newark and I am proud to be part of it. I have worked in Newark for many years during my law enforcement career, and take great pride in doing my part to assist the task force in its efforts to reduce violent crime.”

VCI began in August 2017 and meets bi-weekly to coordinate and plan investigations. The task force is comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The purpose of the initiative is to identify potential targets, and known associates responsible for committing violent crime within the city of Newark. Once targets are identified, investigations are launched which potentially lead to their arrest on federal charges based upon their extensive criminal histories. As a result of this highly successful initiative, other major cities in New Jersey are in the process of developing their own Violent Crime Initiative task forces based on this model program.

The New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB) is committed to promoting public safety, utilizing effective methods to aid supervised offenders in reentering society, and to reduce the recidivism of offenders while addressing the needs of crime victims. As required by law, appointed parole board members and staff conduct approximately 13,500 hearings per year, solicit input from victims, and decide upon parole matters. Nearly 400 sworn SPB parole officers supervise more than 15,500 offenders and act as New Jersey's primary law enforcement agency responsible for sex offender supervision. Additionally, SPB officers are also active partners with a variety of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and task forces. Finally, the SPB's Community Programs Unit partners with government, non-profit, and private agencies to connect former inmates with vocational, mental health, and related services.

Photo Caption:

Photo # 1: left to right - United States Attorney General William Barr, Lt. Anthony Venancio (Newark PD), Captain William Mehalaris (Newark PD), Sgt. Matthew Testa (State Parole Board), Lt. Craig Costello (NJ State Police), Sgt. John Marcelli (Essex County Prosecutors Office), Sgt. Chris Bozios (Essex County Sheriff's Office), Craig Carpinetto, US Attorney District of NJ.

Photo # 2: Close-up of New Jersey State Parole Sergeant Matthew Testa receiving his award.



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