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Honorable David Patterson
Executive Chamber
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Patterson:

State Senators Bruno and Nuzzolio have passed Bill S6908 in less than two months. The bill deals with changes in the parole board system and the increase of murders (215) that were paroled last year. These changes include:

Item 1: Having all three members of the parole board vote for release for Class A felony.

\$ Now only two members must vote for release for inmates who committed a Class A felony.

Item 2: The Department of Parole wants to maintain to list on their website a listing of the parole hearings.

\$ This change is a duplication on the Department of Corrections= website whereby under the list of inmates, they have the month of the parole hearing, conditional release date and the last release date.

Item 3: Allowing crime victims who did not request it at the time of their conviction to receive a notice of the date of parole hearing date if they choose to do so.

Item 4: Requiring all crime victims to have a website to see if they have been given a hearing notice. They also want, besides the right they have now, for a written statement they also want the right for an oral statement.

\$ At the present time, no one except the inmate can give an oral statement and be questioned by the parole board members.

\$ If the bill becomes law, the victim=s and inmate families which if this is passed this must happen also the parole hearing will go on much longer. At present, the time of the parole hearing is not long enough in many cases.

- Item 5: Require the parole board to give notice to the victim with the same options as the fourth requirement (above).
- Item 6: Requiring the Division of Parole to provide the State Legislature an Annual Report on all parole releases, release rates and any other information requested. Which is unclear at this point?
- Item 7: The Division of Parole must contact the local DA in the county where the crime was committed whenever an A-felon or Violent Felony Offender comes up for parole.
- Item 8: The law goes into effect when the bill is signed into law.
- Item 9: Deals with the Assembly bill A10108. The Governor must review the parole board hearing and overrule the parole board decision.

We believe this bill must be vetoed in the event the Assembly passes it. As was mentioned, the other faults with this bill are numerous.

The major problem with this bill is that it includes all inmates and does not deal with the individuals who were teens when the crime was committed and inmates with mental illnesses.

Sincerely,

FOR THE CHELSEA REFORM DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Lynn Kotler (II)

Lynn Kotler, President

cc: Hon. State Senator, Tom Duane
Hon. State Senator Liz Kruger
Hon. Assembly Member, Richard Gottfried

PAROLE BOARD CHANGES

WHEREAS, The parole legislation bill S6908 is a bill that passed the State Crime Committee because of the increase of murders granted parole last year.

WHEREAS, the first change would require all three members of the parole board of inmates convicted of a Class A felony.

WHEREAS, the second change would require the Department of Parole to maintain on their web site a listing of parole hearings.

WHEREAS, the third change would have crime victims to change the date of the parole board hearing if they so choose.

WHEREAS, the fourth change would allow all crime victims to have the availability of a website whereby they can look up the date of the parole board hearing and besides having the right for a written statement, they would have the right for an oral statement.

WHEREAS, the fifth change is basically the same as the fourth change above.

WHEREAS, the sixth change would require the Department of Parole to provide the State Legislature an Annual Report on all parole releases, the rate and other information.

WHEREAS, the last change would mandate The Division of Parole to contact the local district attorney in the county where the crime was committed when an A-felon or Violent Felony comes up parole.

RESOLVE, that the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club believes that bill S6908 has many faults and in the unlikeness that the Assembly passes the bill, Governor Patterson must veto it. The major objection is that the bill wants to include all current inmates, which is illegal. The next objection is the duplication of information. At present, the Department of Corrections has a lookup for all inmates that includes the next parole board hearing and all and final release date. At this time, the State should try to save money and not spend money on duplicate information on the website. Another objection is the right for an oral hearing before the Parole Board. If this happens, the inmate must have the right to people give an oral statement before the Parole Board. At present, the inmate time in most cases is not long enough. If the bill becomes law, we will need more parole board members. We agree changes must be made in the parole; you are exploring this in your sentencing guideline committee. The bill does not include inmates who committed crimes as teens or inmates with mental illnesses.