



News for Immediate Release

Oct. 25, 2012

Governor Corbett Signs Justice Reinvestment; Other Law Enforcement Bills

Harrisburg – Governor Tom Corbett today signed House Bill 135, the second phase of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative that will redirect funds from corrections to communities.

Corbett also signed into law several other pieces of legislation, all related to Pennsylvania's criminal justice system.

"These reforms are all part of a philosophy that says justice, in order to work, must be administered with firmness, compassion and common sense," Corbett said. "We need to be smarter, more adaptable and more determined to solve crime and prevent crime."

Accompanied by Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel, several members of the General Assembly and others who sponsored or advocated for the legislation, Corbett signed the bills into law today at Harrisburg Area Community College.

Wetzel, along with the lawmakers, Sens. Stewart Greenleaf (R-Bucks), Dominic Pileggi (R-Chester), Daylin

Leach (D-Delaware), as well as Reps. Ron Marsico (R-Dauphin), Thomas Caltagirone (D-Berks) and Glen Grell (R-Cumberland), were all outspoken advocates of Justice Reinvestment.

In January, Corbett established a working group, including cabinet members, lawmakers from all four legislative caucuses and local criminal justice leaders. With support from the Council of State Governments, the Pew Center on the States and the Department of Justice, the group studied Pennsylvania's current judicial system and recommended ways to make it more efficient and effective.

Once implemented, funds generated from savings in the state prison system can then be redirected back to local communities to be used for law enforcement, probation, parole and victims' services.

Also attending today's event with the governor were cadets from the 102nd class of HACC's Municipal Police Academy. Graduates of the academy earn certification to work for Pennsylvania's municipal police departments.

In addition to the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, Corbett also signed the following legislative bills that passed this term:

House Bill 815 – This legislation amends the crimes code to broaden penalties, further providing for the prosecution of the sexual abuse of children and providing for the offense of transmission of sexually explicit images by a minor, also known as sexting.

House Bill 898 – Restores a five-year mandatory

minimum sentence for those convicted of making repeat straw purchases of firearms. Earlier this year in Montgomery County, Plymouth Township Police Officer Brad Fox was shot and killed by a man who purchased an illegally acquired gun.

House Bill 1121 – Provides sentencing enhancements for crimes of violence or drug dealing committed in association with a criminal gang.

House Bill 2400 – This updates Pennsylvania’s wiretap law, to reflect new technology and further provide for definitions of the law, as well as the possession, sale, and distribution of devices.

Senate Bill 86 – Updates the Motor Vehicle Code’s chop shop language, offering a broader definition to include vehicles, trailers and semitrailers, as well as outlining specific guidelines for inspection and searches of garages and repair shops.

House Bill 1794 – Act providing for HIV-related testing for certain sex offenders. This brings Pennsylvania into compliance with the Violence Against Women Act, allowing for the testing of certain sexual offenders within 48 hours after criminal information is filed.

House Bill 235 – This legislation provides for the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline Notification Act; imposing duties on the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to develop a response plan to help victims.

Senate Bill 850 – Provides sentencing exceptions for minors convicted of murder, providing options for judges

rather than the mandatory life in prison; expungement for certain juvenile offenders, sentencing enhancements for murder of a child under the age of 13 and provides the victim advocate with the authority to advocate for victims of juvenile crimes.

Senate Bill 941—Increases fines for public drunkenness and underage drinking. The bill also makes it a summary offense if a person less than 21 years, attempts to purchase, purchases, consumes, possesses or knowingly and intentionally transports alcoholic beverages. Currently a summary offense carries a fine of not more than \$300 unless otherwise provided and this legislation increases it to \$500 for the first offense and \$1,000 for second and subsequent offenses.

For more information, visit www.pa.gov.

Media contact: Janet Kelley, 717-783-1116