

# ASSEMBLY, No. 2251

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 212th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 30, 2006

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman WILLIAM D. PAYNE**

**District 29 (Essex and Union)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes "Commission to Examine Strategies for Strengthening Familial Bond Between Children and Incarcerated Parents."

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



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2

1 AN ACT concerning children and incarcerated parents.

2

3 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
4 of New Jersey:

5

6 1. a. There is established a Commission to Examine Strategies  
7 for Strengthening the Familial Bond Between Children and  
8 Incarcerated Parents.

9 The commission shall consist of 21 members as follows:

10 (1) two members of the Senate to be appointed by the President of  
11 the Senate who shall each be of different political parties;

12 (2) two members of the General Assembly to be appointed by the  
13 Speaker of the General Assembly who shall each be of different  
14 political parties;

15 (3) the Commissioners of Corrections, Education, Community  
16 Affairs and Human Services, the Chairman of the State Parole  
17 Board, and the Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice  
18 Commission, or their designees, who shall serve ex-officio;

19 (4) nine public members appointed by the Governor who shall  
20 include a representative of the Association for Children of New  
21 Jersey, a representative of Foster and Adoptive Family Services, a  
22 representative of Legal Services of New Jersey, a representative of  
23 the law enforcement community, a child protection services  
24 caseworker with experience in working with children of  
25 incarcerated parents, a licensed social worker with experience or  
26 expertise in working with incarcerated parents and their families, a  
27 parent of a child whose other parent is incarcerated, a person whose  
28 parent has been incarcerated, and a member of the clergy; and

29 (5) two public members with an interest in children's issues, one  
30 of whom one shall be appointed by the President of the Senate and  
31 one shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

32 b. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled  
33 in the same manner provided for the original appointments. The  
34 public members of the commission shall serve without  
35 compensation but may be reimbursed for traveling and other  
36 miscellaneous expenses necessary to perform their duties, within  
37 the limits of funds made available to the commission for its  
38 purposes.

39 c. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable but no  
40 later than 60 days following the appointment of its members and  
41 shall select a chairperson and vice-chairperson from among the  
42 members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not  
43 be a member of the commission.

44 d. The commission may meet at the call of its chair and hold  
45 hearings at the times and in the places it may deem appropriate and  
46 necessary to fulfill its charge. The commission shall be entitled to  
47 call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees  
48 of any State, county or municipal department, board, bureau,

1 commission or agency as it may require and as may be available to  
2 it for its purposes.

3 e. The commission may seek the advice of experts, such as  
4 persons specializing in the fields of psychology, education, criminal  
5 or family law or other related fields as deemed appropriate by the  
6 membership of the commission.

7 f. The Juvenile Justice Commission shall provide staff services  
8 and other necessary support to the commission  
9

10 2. a. The commission shall examine the policies, procedures and  
11 operations of the State and county correctional systems in order to  
12 develop recommendations regarding the most effective methods of:  
13 (1) developing strategies for strengthening the familial bond  
14 between children and incarcerated parents, when strengthening the  
15 familial bond is in the best interests of the child; and (2) reducing  
16 antisocial behavior and attachment disorders of children of  
17 incarcerated parents and the intergenerational cycle of criminality  
18 common among families of incarcerated parents.

19 b. The commission shall present a report of its findings and  
20 recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later than  
21 12 months after the date of its initial meeting.  
22

23 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire on the  
24 30<sup>th</sup> day after the commission presents its report to the Governor  
25 and the legislature.  
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28 STATEMENT  
29

30 The bill establishes the Commission to Examine Strategies for  
31 Strengthening the Familial Bond Between Children and  
32 Incarcerated Parents.

33 The commission is to consist of 21 members as follows: two  
34 members of the Senate who are of different political parties; two  
35 members of the General Assembly who are of different political  
36 parties; the Commissioners of Corrections, Education, Community  
37 Affairs and Human Services; the Chairman of the State Parole  
38 Board; the Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission;  
39 nine public members appointed by the Governor, including  
40 representatives of the Association for Children of New Jersey,  
41 Foster and Adoptive Family Services, Legal Services of New  
42 Jersey, and the law enforcement community, as well as a child  
43 protection services caseworker, a licensed social worker, a parent of  
44 a child whose other parent is incarcerated, a person whose parent  
45 has been incarcerated and a member of the clergy; and two  
46 members of the general public with an interest in children's issues  
47 appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the  
48 General Assembly, respectively.

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1       The bill requires the Juvenile Justice Commission to provide  
2 staff services and other necessary support to the commission.

3       The bill directs the commission to examine the policies,  
4 procedures and operations of the State and county correctional  
5 systems in order to develop recommendations regarding the most  
6 effective methods of: (1) developing strategies for strengthening the  
7 familial bond between children and incarcerated parents; and (2)  
8 reducing antisocial behavior and attachment disorders of children of  
9 incarcerated parents and the intergenerational cycle of criminality  
10 common among families of incarcerated parents.

11       The bill requires the commission to present a report of its  
12 findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature  
13 no later than 12 months after its initial meeting. The commission is  
14 to expire 30 days after the report is issued.