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New Jersey Bail Reform, A Successful Lie.

Since the inception of our country, bail bonding is the private sector tool to balance the rights of the accused with the needs of societal justice by guaranteeing the appearance of defendants at trial while giving an opportunity for those defendants to be released with some financial surety. The fear of a revocation of a bond, which leads defendants to be held in jail, deters re-offense and encourages good behavior while on bond. Unfortunately, since the passage and implementation of the bail reform act in New Jersey, the preference of the criminal has taken precedence over the safety of the public. This once effective deterrent to re-offense has gone away.

A recently issued report on the bail reform law, by administrating Judge Glenn Grant, shows how misplaced this priority has become. The report touts the law as a success in that the number of defendants being held pre-trial has dropped by almost 20% over the past year. Proclaiming this result as a success while ignoring the skyrocketing increase of crime and Failure to Appear rates shows the intention of the law was only to get more criminals released in a desperate attempt to cut costs (which the report shows is not happening). This asinine assessment of the law is tantamount to declaring a drop in the crime rate after legalizing murder then selling that as a success.

As foolish as that sounds, Judge Grant's assessment matches this level of absurdity with disastrous consequences. This law has been successful only in the mass release of criminals with no accountability, no financial stake in appearing for trial, no deterrent to re-offend, and little chance of being caught when they do re-offend. The only results of these "successes" are the increased crime, Failure to Appear rates, and the victimization of law-abiding citizens.

National crime data provided by the FBI shows that only 18% of property crimes committed in the United States are cleared by arrest or other final action. Two categories of property crimes which affect law-abiding citizens the most, car theft and burglary, are only cleared 13% of the time. When it comes to violent crimes, only 46% are cleared. Disturbingly, however, under the category of violent crimes, which include rape and sexual assault, only 36% of those are cleared. New Jersey has successfully unleashed, on its citizens, criminal elements who know they are likely not to get caught. If they are caught, they know they will be rereleased. This "success" led Assemblyman Bob Andrezjek to proclaim in a letter to California Speaker of the House Rendon that "this law is victimizing citizens every day."

The great lie of bail reform (non-monetary release) is that dangerous criminals would not be released. Unfortunately for the citizens of New Jersey, this has been proven false with deadly and hazardous consequences. Early 2017, in Little Egg Harbor, a convicted child sex predator was arrested on new charges stemming from an attempt to lure a 12-year-old girl to his house for sex in exchange for a game console. He was released under the bail reform law. Christian Rogers was shot to death in cold blood and with no provocation. This occurred in the middle of the day near his home by a man released a few days earlier as a result of the bail reform law. This man had an extensive criminal history including gun charges and current charges relating to guns. These are but a few examples which represent the deadly and dangerous consequences of this "successful" law.

The other great lie of non-monetary release policies is that the mass release of these criminals leads to a cost reduction from not housing these people in jail pre-trial. The report shows that this has been a failure as well. Judge Grant states that there is not enough stable funding to pay for the administration of the system. Furthermore, monitoring services can't be expanded because of a lack of funds. When a defendant posted a monetary or surety bond, the defendant paid for it, and the costs associated with monitoring and accountability were borne by the private sector. Taxpayers are now paying for the release of these criminals. The taxpayers are paying for their victimization through the increase in crime, and the taxpayers are funding the rise in Failure to Appear rates.

A recent study by the Regional Economic Studies Institute, based out of Towson University and led by 22-year economics expert Dr. Darius Irani, shows that the yearly operating cost of the bail reform law will top \$379 million. After deducting the presumed savings from not housing defendants pre-trial the cost comes to \$215 million. The study found over \$17 million in startup costs, mostly borne by the counties, and estimated indirect costs of \$65 million per year.

The New Jersey legislature and former Governor Christie stabbed the people of New Jersey with a law that is costing taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, one which results in skyrocketing crime and Failure to Appear rates. All of this and an administrating judge is stating it as a "success" because more criminals are being released from jail than ever before. The famous movie quote "stupid is as stupid does" applies to those ruling in New Jersey. Now is the time for the citizens of New Jersey to stand up to this dangerous absurdity by their elected officials and demand this law be repealed.