



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives

FROM: Representative Brendan F. Boyle

DATE: February 9, 2011

SUBJECT: Reintroduction: Parole Reform for Repeat Violent Offenders

In the near future, I will be re-introducing legislation to reform our parole laws as they relate to criminals who are repeat violent offenders. This legislation is similar to HB 1567, which passed the Judiciary Committee 18-8 last session.

As you may know, in the last few years seven Philadelphia police officers have been killed in the line of duty. All of the murdered officers lived in my area, and three of them lived in my district. The culprits in these killings, as well as other murders throughout the Commonwealth, were repeat violent offenders. This relatively small segment of the population is responsible for a large share of the violence we have seen.

Our current system allows prisoners to become eligible for parole after serving only 50% of their maximum sentence. My bill would impose firm prison sentences without the possibility of early parole for repeat violent offenders.

Some are naturally concerned about the high amount of money that we spend on our prison system every year, especially when facing a \$4 billion deficit. But it is worth noting that my bill only relates to a small percentage of our parole-eligible prison population. A detailed financial projection shows the financial cost of my legislation is minimal.

The parole system largely works when dealing with non-violent offenders. In 2007, 95 percent of the state's nonviolent offenders (31,000 parolees) were not rearrested. The crisis at hand is with repeat violent offenders. We're letting the worst of the worst, the repeat violent criminals, out of prison on parole. These people then return to share our streets only to repeat their acts of violence again, wreaking havoc on our communities.

If you wish co-sponsor this important piece of legislation, please contact Kristen Womelsdorf at 717-787-3055 or Kwomelsd@pahouse.net. Thank you.