



**County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers
Association of Pennsylvania**

**Funding of County Adult
Probation and Parole Services
In
Pennsylvania**

September 12, 2008

Good morning. My name is Conway Bushey, Executive Director of the County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers' Association of Pennsylvania and retired Director of the Bureau of Probation Services, Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole. I am joined by Michael Potteiger, the Director of Adult Probation and Parole Services in Dauphin County and President of the Association.

We want to thank you for the opportunity this morning to discuss funding of county adult probation and parole programs and services.

Probation enjoys a unique status within the criminal justice system. Each year ushers in a "new high" in the number of offenders either incarcerated or in the community under supervision, and each year probation serves as the disposition most often used by the courts. At the end of 2007, there were 206,716 adult offenders under the supervision of county adult probation departments in Pennsylvania. Ten years ago, that figure was 157,380 or an increase of over 31%. As the primary sentencing disposition of the justice system, probation is best positioned strategically to contribute to public safety and community well being. As a matter of social policy, probation occupies the borderland between law enforcement and human services. As a justice system sanction, probation is vested with wide-ranging leverage to influence the conduct of offenders. Its strength lies in its authority and capacity to repair broken lives and hold offenders accountable for the harm their actions have caused victims and communities.

Probation and parole agencies are in the business of community safety through instituting a balanced approach of surveillance, treatment and enforcement.

The Decline in Funding

It is evident that the practice of probation has been affected by the criminal justice system's shift toward punitive crime control policies during the past several decades. This shift has triggered a growing and unrelenting reliance on incarceration in response to crime, accompanied by ever-greater expenditures for prison expansion. The marked increase in the prison population and the fiscal support necessary to sustain this growth has taken place at the expense of probation, and community corrections more generally. If the track record of probation is characterized by serious deficiencies, one reason is that the field of probation has been weakly funded and, at times, understaffed.

While spending on prisons continues to increase, the opposite holds true for probation relative to population growth and funding. The number of offenders on probation has shown a steady and significant growth, yet budgetary support and funding have remained static, if not declined. There is little doubt that insufficient funding and inadequate staffing have impacted probation, resulting in the growing problem of offender failure rates while on supervision and recidivism.

The following table shows a comparison of workload data for county adult probation and parole departments:

Table 1

Year	Prof. Staff	Caseload	Supv. PO's	Ave. Tot. Caseload	Ave. Act. Caseload	Cost/Offender	Investigations
1990-1991	1,082	135,502				\$345	33,125
1991-1992	1,120	144,484				351	32,016
1992-1993	1,169	137,306				392	37,176
1993-1994	1,226	135,129				408	40,435
1994-1995	1,277	143,904				413	37,396
1995-1996	1,315	152,074				384	40,737
1996-1997	1,355	157,380				418	49,961
1997-1998	1,414	165,495				424	55,121
1998-1999	1,486	183,073	1,056	173	131	416	62,598
1999-2000	1,595	182,018	1,099	166	128	475	64,143
2000-2001	1,668	179,908	1,174	153	122	467	98,068
2001-2002	1,720	188,573	1,180	160	125	536	97,363
2002-2003	1,770	190,314	1,299	147	117	577	94,064
2003-2004	1,761	193,374	1,297	149	118	577	97,758
2004-2005	1,758	194,417	1,279	152	121	632	101,006
2005-2006	1,775	194,347	1,340	160	116	606	146,786
2006-2007	1,838	200,056	1,357	162	118	621	154,214
2007-2008	1,891	206,716	1,418	159	117	680	161,036

For the most part, county adult probation and parole staff are court-appointed employees. Staff salaries, benefits and operational expenses are funded by county tax dollars, state grant-in-aid funds administered by the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP), grants awarded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) for specialized programs and services, supervision fees collected from adult offenders and fees charged for specific programs (electronic monitoring, urinalysis, etc.)