

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 97

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 4, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex and Hudson)

Senator ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

SYNOPSIS

Designates last week of April of each year as “Reentry Week.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/16/2024)

1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating the last week in April of each
2 year as “Reentry Week.”
3
4 **WHEREAS**, The vast majority of people currently serving sentences in
5 New Jersey prisons and jails will transition into communities
6 throughout the State when they leave incarceration; and
7 **WHEREAS**, Formerly incarcerated individuals face numerous
8 challenges that include finding work, housing, healthcare, addiction
9 treatment, mental health, transportation, and reuniting with family,
10 which can lead to recidivism, health, safety, and social concerns;
11 and
12 **WHEREAS**, Federal, State, and local leaders recognize these challenges
13 and are working on policies and programs focused on removing the
14 barriers that prevent formerly incarcerated people from pursuing
15 healthy and productive lives when they return to communities after
16 serving time in prison or in jail; and
17 **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Reentry Services Commission (RSC) is
18 charged with examining issues relating to prisoner reentry,
19 including, but not limited to, identifying specific services that are
20 necessary for successful reentry, identifying current obstacles to
21 inmates receiving these services, and proposing solutions to remove
22 these obstacles; and
23 **WHEREAS**, In 2019 the RSC released a report that offered 100
24 practical action steps to improve the lives of those being released
25 from prison, with a focus on addiction treatment, healthcare, legal
26 issues, and employment training; and
27 **WHEREAS**, The Commission on Reentry Services for Women
28 (CRSW) is charged with examining issues relating to women
29 prisoner reentry including, but not limited to: identifying physical
30 and psychological hardships endured while incarcerated that may
31 impede successful reentry; specific services that are necessary for
32 successful reentry; current obstacles to female prisoners receiving
33 these services; and proposing solutions to remove these obstacles;
34 and
35 **WHEREAS**, In 2020 the CRSW released a report that offered more than
36 70 recommendations for how to improve the lives of women being
37 released with a focus on employment, healthcare, housing, family
38 reunification, and domestic violence; and
39 **WHEREAS**, Local reentry councils, community, and faith based
40 organizations, and others across New Jersey play key roles in
41 providing resources for formerly incarcerated people; and
42 **WHEREAS**, Reentry Week provides an opportunity to raise public
43 awareness about the challenges that formerly incarcerated
44 individuals face and to encourage organizations, including State
45 agencies, to support those efforts; and
46 **WHEREAS**, Communities throughout the State are encouraged to
47 observe Reentry Week; now, therefore,

1 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the*
2 *State of New Jersey:*

3

4 1. The last week of April of each year is designated as
5 “Reentry Week” to raise public awareness about the challenges that
6 formerly incarcerated individuals face and to encourage
7 organizations, including State agencies, to support those efforts.

8

9 2. The Governor may issue each year a proclamation calling
10 upon public officials and citizens of this State to observe the week
11 with appropriate activities and programs.

12

13 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

14

15

16

STATEMENT

17

18 This joint resolution declares the last week of April of each year
19 as “Reentry Week” to raise public awareness about the challenges
20 that formerly incarcerated individuals face and to encourage
21 organizations, including State agencies, to support those efforts.

22 Reentry Week dedicates a week to remind New Jersey
23 communities and citizens of the importance of supporting those
24 who have been incarcerated; and have served out their sentences so
25 that they may be productive members of our society.