

RESOLUTION

NEW JERSEY STATE ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

SUPPORTING S2760 AND RECOMMENDING THAT THE DEFINITION OF "DANGEROUS TO SELF" BE AMENDED TO INCLUDE THE RISK OF SERIOUS PSYCHIATRIC DEBILITATION

WHEREAS, the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police passed a resolution in 2005 *Supporting Legislation Creating Assisted Outpatient Treatment For People with Severe Mental Illnesses*; and

WHEREAS, S2760 will allow for court ordered outpatient treatment (also known as "assisted outpatient treatment") that has been shown to reduce homelessness, arrests, victimization and violence for people with severe mental illnesses who otherwise refuse treatment; and

WHEREAS, SB2760 recognizes that a "small minority of persons with mental illness who present a danger in the reasonably foreseeable future to themselves, others or property, do so because they do not voluntarily engage in treatment"; and

WHEREAS, the risk of violence and relapse increases when people with severe mental illnesses are not being treated; and

WHEREAS, the role of New Jersey law enforcement officers in responding to crises involving people with severe mental illnesses is continually increasing, the safety of law enforcement officers and citizens, particularly those who have serious mental illnesses, is seriously jeopardized, and an inordinate amount of law enforcement resources are being expended for this purpose at a time when we can least afford it; and

WHEREAS, under current law and S2760 as drafted, intervention for a person refusing treatment cannot occur until it is "probable that substantial bodily injury, serious physical debilitation, ~~or death~~ will result within the reasonably foreseeable future"; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement will continue to bear the burden of responding unless intervention can occur *before* there is a risk of substantial bodily injury, serious physical debilitation, or death; and

WHEREAS, the bill statement indicates the intent that "dangerous to self" include "serious psychiatric deterioration" which would allow for treatment intervention before a situation becomes so dangerous that a law enforcement response is required; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police supports S2760 and recommends that the definition of "danger to self" be amended to include the risk of serious psychiatric debilitation.

SIGNED: Warren P. Wielgus
CHIEF WARREN P. WIELGUS
President

ATTEST: Mitchell C. Sklar
MITCHELL C. SKLAR
Executive Director

DATED: 3 November 2005