



News from ***Assemblywoman Watson Coleman***

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- MEDIA ADVISORY – FRIDAY -

WATSON COLEMAN WILL HOST SOMERSET COUNTY 'SECOND CHANCE' HEARING

(TRENTON) – Assembly Majority Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman Friday will host the first in a series of hearings across New Jersey to improve services and opportunities to help those released from prison avoid returning to crime.

The hearing will be held from 3 to 8 p.m., Friday at First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, 771 Somerset St. in Somerset.

Watson Coleman said the hearings will be a groundbreaking effort to hear from experts and residents on how the state can overhaul programs to prevent recidivism and save taxpayer money.

“Former prisoners and their families lack a voice in our system despite dire need for rehabilitation services for the more than 18,000 people who are released from prison each year,” said Watson Coleman. “New Jersey spends up to \$40,000 per inmate – two times more than what we spend on educating our children. Yet, nearly none of this money has found its way into rehabilitation programs to support a better future for ex-prisoners and their families.”

Watson Coleman said inmates are often released from prison into communities with limited jobs, housing and social services. The Majority Leader said the hearings will build consensus, understanding and support for more effective policies.

“From a fiscal and a social perspective, it makes more sense to focus on keeping people out of jail,” Watson Coleman said. “It’s time that we create a pathway for people who have served time to finally become contributing members of society. It’s hypocrisy that we are punishing people for the same crime twice through a system that prohibits better opportunities.”

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