



News from **Assemblywoman Watson Coleman**

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MAJORITY LEADER'S STATEMENT ON 'SECOND CHANCE' **HEARING HELD THIS EVENING IN MERCER COUNTY**

(TRENTON) – Assembly Majority Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman today issued the following statement during the second ‘Second Chance’ hearing focused on improving services for inmates and their families to help released prisoners avoid returning to crime:

“Today’s hearing provided more invaluable insight into what is needed to overhaul New Jersey criminal justice system to ensure we’re spending money wisely and getting the best results.

“New Jersey has the dubious distinction of having the nation’s highest proportion of nonviolent drug offenders, and that’s attributable to mandatory minimum sentencing. Rather than deterring crime, this system has trapped countless nonviolent offenders in the prison system, costing New Jersey taxpayers hundreds of millions each year.

“In fact, we spend more than \$300 million each year just on 35 percent of the prison population who are serving mandatory sentences attached to drug-related crimes.

“Just a fraction of that could be spent on social service programs, education and other alternatives to incarceration.

“We can do better and will.”

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