

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-_____

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY JAILS AS DIRECTED BY GOVERNOR MURPHY IN ACCORDANCE WITH S 2519 UNLESS RELEASED BACK TO THE COUNTIES IN WHICH THEY WERE SENTENCED TO JAIL INSTEAD OF RELEASING THEM IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY.

WHEREAS, on October 19, 2020 Governor Murphy signed into law legislation which authorizes the early release of prisoners to combat COVID-19 in the prison facilities in the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, Governor Murphy has authorized the first wave of prisoners to be released November 4, 2020, which will number in excess of 2,000 prisoners of which only 86 were convicted and sentenced to jail by Cumberland County Prosecutors and Judges with a second wave of 1,000 prisoners to be released thereafter; and

WHEREAS, Cumberland County has one the largest number of prisons within the State, which means that the majority of those prisoners to be released will be released in Cumberland County; and

WHEREAS, the Bill signed into law by Governor Murphy requires that, within 30 days of release into Cumberland County, the prisoners will be given information regarding availability for social services, housing and eligibility for any other benefits and services, specifically in Cumberland County; and

WHEREAS, because the City of Vineland has a bus terminal on Landis Avenue, a great number of the prisoners being released will be taken to the Vineland Bus Terminal and released into our community, causing a drain on the City's finances, social services and programs to take care of Vineland residents as well as causing a drain on our First Responders, including police and EMS services; and

WHEREAS, as the law is the first in the nation to be implemented, no one, including the Governor, has any statistics regarding the impact on the communities of such an undertaking, however it is clear that it is unfair for the host Counties for jails to bear the burden of receiving those released prisoners and it is not surprising that the sponsoring Senators for the legislation are all from northern counties including Bergen, Passaic, Hudson, Hunterdon and Mercer Counties and that Senator Michael Testa voted against the legislation as Senator for District 1 in which Vineland and surrounding Cumberland County municipalities are located;

WHEREAS, while the early release of prisoners is not in the best interest of the communities, the fair method to release such prisoners is for the prisoners to be delivered back to the counties which prosecuted and sentenced the prisoner to jail so all of the communities share in the cost of this undertaking instead of the counties that least can afford to do so.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Council of the City of Vineland oppose the early release of prisoners into the communities and further request the Governor and legislators reconsider S2519 so as to release those prisoners specified within the Bill back to the Counties which prosecuted and sentenced those prisoners being released.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be delivered to the Office of the Governor, Office of Senator Testa, Cumberland County Commissioners and the newspapers servicing Cumberland County

Adopted:

President of Council

ATTEST:

City Clerk