

MATTHEW J. PLATKIN
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NEW JERSEY
R.J. Hughes Justice Complex
25 Market Street
P.O. Box 112
Trenton, New Jersey 08625
*Attorney for Defendants, Jennifer LeBaron and
the Juvenile Justice Commission*

By: Patrick Jhoo
Deputy Attorney General
Attorney ID No. 165102015
(609) 376-2848
Patrick.jhoo@law.njoag.gov

COUNTY OF ATLANTIC, et.
al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

NEW JERSEY JUVENILE
JUSTICE COMMISSION, et. al.,

Defendants.

: NEW JERSEY SUPERIOR COURT
: ATLANTIC COUNTY – LAW DIVISION

: CIVIL ACTION

: DOCKET NO. ATL-L-1947-24

: **CERTIFICATION OF**
: **LISA MACALUSO**

I, Lisa Macaluso, of full age, hereby certifies and says:

1. I am the Deputy Executive Director, Policy, Research and Planning within the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC).

2. I make this certification in support of Defendants' Opposition to Plaintiffs' Application for an Order to Show Cause and motion to dismiss Plaintiffs' Amended Complaint presently pending before the New Jersey Superior Court. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated herein.

3. Exercising the JJC's authority, under N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-37, to cease admissions at a County Youth Detention Center has significant potential impacts across the juvenile justice system statewide. That is due - in part - to counties, relying on each other through a network of Shared Services Agreements, which permit counties to transfer youth to other counties as necessary and appropriate. These agreements permit counties, including those without youth detention centers, to utilize space in other facilities to accommodate their pre-adjudication youth.

4. In an attempt to avoid such statewide impacts, over the past several months the JJC has taken various steps to address issues relating to overcrowding at Atlantic County Youth Detention Center (AYC), and to explore and encourage the use of available alternatives to detention.

4. Specifically, as to AYC, the JJC has attended multiple meetings with various stakeholders in Atlantic County to share detention utilization data and discuss avenues to resolve some of the root causes of overcrowding at AYC.

5. Additionally, the JJC, through the Council on Juvenile Justice System Improvement established a Detention Utilization Committee made up of representative from the Office of the Public Defender, various Prosecutor's Offices, Detention Administrators, the Association of Counties, the Association for Children of New Jersey and the Department of Children and Families.

6. Through that group, the JJC continues to formulate potential solutions related to the drivers of detention overcrowding and placement issues.

7. Further, the JJC is partnering with the Governor's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee to provide funding opportunities for counties to develop innovative community-based detention alternative programs as a way to safely reduce length of stay in secure detention. These initial programs will serve as models for counties to replicate as additional viable alternatives to pre-adjudication detention and are intended help relieve or avoid overcrowding in the county detention centers across the state.

8. The JJC has also been pursuing options to expand the number of Juvenile Detention Officer Training Academy classes offered at the National Guard Training Academy to help ensure detention staff are well trained to work with young people and to reduce staff turnover that is one cause of detention staffing issues across the State.

9. In addition, the JJC has conducted comprehensive review of county youth detention facilities across the State to reassess maximum population capacities and to reassess statewide capacity to ensure that the juvenile justice system can accommodate Atlantic County youth in anticipation of exercising its authority under N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-37.

10. Then on November 12, 2024 the JJC issued a notice requiring corrective action to address overcrowding at AYC and administrative orders ceasing admissions at AYC beyond its maximum population capacity. True and accurate copies of those documents are attached as Exhibit A.

11. Later that same day, the JJC issued notices to Bergen, Camden, Essex, Middlesex, Morris and Ocean Counties with orders requiring them to begin accepting Atlantic Youth within five days of receipt. True and accurate copies of those document are attached as Exhibit B.

I certify that the statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willingly false, I am subject to punishment.

Lisa Macaluso

Lisa Macaluso
Deputy Executive Director,
Policy, Research and Planning

Dated: November 12, 2024