
Testa Introduces Bill Package Aimed at Criminal Justice Reform

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Senator Michael Testa introduced several criminal justice reform bills this week aimed directly at reducing crime, imposing harsher penalties for lawbreaking, supporting our police, and protecting all New Jerseyans.



Sen. Michael Testa introduced several criminal justice reform bills this week aimed directly at reducing crime, imposing harsher penalties for lawbreaking, supporting our police, and protecting all New Jerseyans. (©iStock)

"We all realize the situation is critical and something must be done to restore law and order to New Jersey's streets and neighborhoods," said Testa (R-1). "The lawlessness I have seen play out in South Jersey and elsewhere is shocking, and it is the direct result of the Murphy Administration's mind-boggling agenda of appeasement. In word and in action, the Governor has been dismissive of the concerns of the bipartisan majority of residents who follow the rules, respect the police, and demand their elected officials to help keep them safe. This criminal justice reform package will help rectify the situation Governor Murphy has put us in."

The bills the Senator introduced include:

- [S-3616](#) - Establishes rebuttable presumption that person charged with motor vehicle theft be detained prior to trial; imposes mandatory sentencing for thefts involving motor

vehicle.

- [S-3620](#) - Establishes deadlines for publishing crime data, issuance of annual report by Attorney General.
- [S-3622](#) - Allows municipality to establish alcohol-free and cannabis-free areas and to impose civil penalties for violations.
- [S-3623](#) - Removes five-year prohibition on municipalities promulgating ordinances or regulations related to cannabis industry.
- [SR-113](#) - Urges Governor and Attorney General to provide assistance to municipalities in response to unpermitted mass gatherings and "pop-up parties" in New Jersey.
- [S-3398](#) - Permits designation of special event zones for traffic regulation purposes during certain large events. The impetus for this bill arose from the unsanctioned H2O car rally in Wildwood last September which [killed 2 people](#) and injured several others.

"These are just a few of the dozens of anti-crime bills sponsored by Republicans ready for legislative action, but the Democrat majority has been slow to post these bills for votes," added Testa. "This is not a partisan issue, it's one that touches every one of us in our communities one way or another. Hopefully, these bills—and others—will garner support from both sides of the aisle so that we can bring law and order back to our streets."

Testa is already a sponsor of several key Republican criminal justice reform bills:

- [S-581](#) - Prohibits release of illegal immigrants from correctional facilities.
- [S-642](#) - Removes criminal liability for law enforcement officers who have investigative encounter with underage person for possession of alcohol or cannabis unless civil rights are violated.
- [S-1206](#) - Enhances penalties for certain crimes committed during riots and creates new crimes of mob intimidation and cyber-intimidation by publication.
- [S-3170](#) - Increases penalties for assault and harassment against sports officials and participants.
- [SCR-20](#) - Amends Constitution to dedicate money credited to the "9-1-1 System and Emergency Response Trust Fund Account" to maintain 9-1-1 system and emergency response.

"From opening the doors and letting the convicted criminals out, to tying the hands of the police and prohibiting them from detaining minors with marijuana or alcohol, Trenton has emboldened the bad-actors and handcuffed the good guys. Is it any wonder that bad behavior has escalated?" Testa said.

"New Jersey residents are tired of the foot-dragging and the laissez-faire attitude toward criminals. Safe streets are not a partisan luxury. They are something all Garden State families desire and deserve."

Testa also co-sponsors the following crime-fighting measures including: S-55, upgrades burglary of a residence to a crime of the second degree and requires a mandatory period of parole ineligibility if residence was occupied at time of offense; S-705, creates first degree crime of home invasion, makes crime subject to No Early Release Act; S-1782, upgrades burglary of a residence as a crime of the second degree; S-2663, increases degree of crime for unlawful taking of motor vehicle; S-2664, creates second degree crime for operation of stolen vehicle in manner that creates risk of injury to person or property; S-2675, requires proof of ownership

prior to resale of catalytic converter and upgrades theft of catalytic converter to one degree higher than underlying offense; and S-3048, establishes crime of gang shoplifting.