



## State of New Jersey

### STATE PAROLE BOARD

JON S. CORZINE, GOVERNOR  
YOLETTE C. ROSS., CHAIRMAN  
Post Office Box 862  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

# Media Release

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For more information contact:

**Neal Buccino:** 609-292-4031 office; 609-468-9728 cell  
**Paul Loriquet:** 973-621-4021 office; 973-715-3970 cell;  
**John Holl:** 908-527-4621 office

## **More than 4,000 Turn Themselves in at Fugitive Safe Surrender *Striking Turnout Makes FSS-Newark the Second-Largest in the nation Unprecedented Partnership in Essex and Union counties***

NEWARK – More than 4,000 fugitives from across New Jersey turned themselves in last week during Fugitive Safe Surrender. The striking turnout made the initiative in Newark the second-largest nationwide in the history of the US Marshals Service-led Fugitive Safe Surrender program.

U.S. Marshal James Plousis, New Jersey Attorney General Anne Milgram and State Parole Board Chairman Yolette C. Ross today joined Essex County Prosecutor Paula T. Dow, Union County Prosecutor Theodore J. Romankow, the Rev. Dr. M. William Howard Jr. and Deacon Edward Cosby of Bethany Baptist Church, Joseph Matara, chief operating officer for New Community Corporation, and other leaders to announce the initiative's successful conclusion.

With more than 4,000 fugitives turning themselves in over four days, the Fugitive Safe Surrender initiative in Newark was the second-largest since the US Marshals Service held the first such operation in 2005. The US Marshals Service is still calculating the numbers based on thousands of fugitive records. Final numbers should be available in the next few weeks. The top Fugitive Safe Surrender site nationwide is Detroit, where 6,578 individuals turned themselves in over four days in June 2008. The third-largest is Camden, NJ, where 2,245 individuals turned themselves in over four days in November, 2008.

US Marshal Plousis said, "We are more than pleased with the success of this program. Due to the hard work of many agencies especially in Essex and Union counties, Fugitive Safe Surrender in Newark has exceeded all previous efforts except that in Detroit. In fact, our initiative had a larger turnout than Detroit's in relation to the population of the host city. The benefits of being able to surrender safely will reverberate far beyond the thousands who participated, to touch their families and their communities all across New Jersey."

"For more than four years now, Fugitive Safe Surrender has proven it works as a cooperative venture of faith-based communities, law enforcement, and the judiciary," Attorney General Milgram said. "It is not an amnesty program, but the first step for a second chance for non-violent offenders to become law-abiding citizens. I believe that is exactly what happened last week for the people who voluntarily surrendered in Newark."

"The opportunity to surrender and receive favorable consideration – not amnesty – is helping thousands of fugitives face the court and get back on the road toward leading productive, law-abiding lives," State Parole Board Chairman Ross said. "This is consistent with the Parole Board's mission to hold ex-offenders accountable for their crimes, while helping them successfully change and reenter society."

The final results of the Fugitive Safe Surrender initiative in Newark are as follows:

- Total number of fugitives from across New Jersey who turned themselves in from Nov. 4 through Nov. 7 at Bethany Baptist Church and the nearby Priory building, headquarters of the New Community Corporation: **More than 4,000** (this includes the 25,000<sup>th</sup> nationwide in the Fugitive Safe Surrender initiative)

- Total who were processed on site: **1,851**
- Total who were not processed on-site, but received vouchers for a future court date: **more than 2,149**
- Total number of individuals who were arrested: **9**

Partial breakdown of the 1,851 individuals processed on-site:

- Number of individuals who had at least one felony warrant: **274**
- Number of individuals who had at least one misdemeanor warrant: **618**
- Number of individuals who had traffic warrants only: **565**
- Number of individuals who had no warrant found: **369**
- Total number of warrants cleared so far: **4,389**, of which **361** were felony warrants

“More than 4,000 fugitives took advantage of this life altering program by turning themselves in, accepting responsibility for their crimes and getting a fresh start with their lives again,” said Essex County Prosecutor Paula T. Dow. “It is our hope the success of the Newark Safe Surrender program will echo to other fugitives across this state and nation.”

“We’re talking about people who are not involved in violent crimes, people who have made mistakes and are trying to repair them,” Union County Prosecutor Theodore J. Romankow said. “This was more rewarding for everyone than bringing them in handcuffs.”

“Bethany Baptist Church is proud to have provided this opportunity for fugitives to take responsibility for what they have done, stop living in hiding and start building productive lives,” Deacon Edward Cosby said. “Surrendering in safety is the first step in receiving a second chance, and in providing healing for the fugitives themselves, and their families and communities.”

“For over forty years, New Community Corporation has been helping families and individuals through our housing, employment, healthcare and education programs. We are pleased to have added to these services by offering our headquarters as the official judicial processing site for the Fugitive Safe Surrender program,” said Joseph Matara, chief operating officer of New Community Corporation. “We believe Fugitive Safe Surrender to be an important program that is allowing people to address both minor and more serious issues they have with the criminal justice system and move on with their lives, thereby helping the community at large.”

Fugitive Safe Surrender was made possible with help from more than 50 agencies and organizations at the Federal, State, county, municipal, community-based and faith-based levels, and with funding awarded by the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs. A full list of the partner agencies and organizations is attached to this press release.

For more information about Fugitive Safe Surrender, see <http://www.usmarshals.gov/safesurrender/index.html>.

The New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB) is New Jersey’s lead reentry agency, and works to ensure ex-prisoners return to society as law-abiding citizens. As required by law, appointed Parole Board Members and staff conduct more than 20,000 hearings per year, solicit input from victims and decide parole matters. SPB’s sworn parole officers supervise more than 15,000 offenders statewide. In addition, SPB is New Jersey’s primary law enforcement agency responsible for sex offender supervision. SPB officers are also active partners with multiple Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies and task forces. Finally, SPB’s Community Programs Unit partners with government, non-profit and private agencies to connect ex-prisoners with vocational, mental health and related services, targeted to break the cycle of recidivism and reduce risk of crime.

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