

CHAPTER 21

AN ACT designated as Fred Baker's Law and establishing July 30 of each year as "Corrections Officer Day" in New Jersey to recognize all corrections officers and to honor those who have been killed in the line of duty.

WHEREAS, The operation of correctional facilities represents a crucial component of the criminal justice system in the United States, and correctional personnel play a vital role in protecting the rights of the public to be safeguarded from criminal activity; and

WHEREAS, Corrections officers in the State of New Jersey oversee the State's correctional facilities and are responsible for the care, custody, and maintenance of more than 25,000 inmates charged to their care; and

WHEREAS, To carry out their responsibilities, corrections officers work under demanding circumstances and face danger in their daily work lives, which sometimes results in the loss of life; and

WHEREAS, On July 30, 1997, Senior Corrections Officer Fred Baker paid the ultimate price when he was brutally stabbed to death by an inmate at Bayside State Prison in Leesburg, Cumberland County; and

WHEREAS, In addition to Senior Corrections Officer Fred Baker, numerous New Jersey corrections officers have lost their lives in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, In 1984, former President Ronald Reagan signed Proclamation 5187, which designated the first week in May as "National Correctional Officers Week" in honor of corrections officers who put their lives on the line every day to protect the public from dangerous criminals and to help prisoners work toward becoming productive members of society; and

WHEREAS, In 1996, Congress expanded and renamed this special week "National Correctional Officers and Employees Week" in recognition of all those employed with city, state and federal correctional departments; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with the federal government's recognition of the indispensable contributions that corrections officers make every day to protect our citizens from harm, it is proper and befitting for the State of New Jersey to honor all corrections officers, not only those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in upholding their duty to the public here in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, It is altogether fitting and appropriate to annually designate July 30th, the anniversary of Senior Corrections Officer Fred Baker's tragic and brutal death in the line of duty, as "Corrections Officer Day" in the State of New Jersey; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.36:2-187 "Corrections Officer Day," July 30; designated.

1. July 30 of each year shall be designated as "Corrections Officer Day" in the State of New Jersey in recognition of the dedicated service corrections officers have rendered to their fellow citizens.

C.36:2-188 Annual proclamation.

2. The Governor shall issue annually a proclamation designating July 30 of each year as "Corrections Officer Day," and with the Legislature call upon all citizens of the State and all other public and private agencies and organizations to celebrate "Corrections Officer Day" by appropriate observance.

C.36:2-189 Flags flown at half-staff at correctional facilities.

3. The Governor shall direct the staff at the State's correctional facilities to fly the flag of the United States and the State flag at half-staff in honor of all those corrections officers who have been killed in the line of duty.

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved July 17, 2012.