

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2376

As Reported By House Committee On:
Corrections
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to the Sentencing Guidelines Commission.

Brief Description: Revising the powers and duties of the Sentencing Guidelines Commission.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris and Jones; by request of Sentencing Guidelines Commission.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Corrections, January 24, 1994, DP;
Appropriations, February 5, 1994, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Long, Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; G. Cole; L. Johnson; Moak; and Ogden.

Staff: Rick Neidhardt (786-7841).

Background: The Sentencing Guidelines Commission, a state agency, was originally assigned the task of recommending to the Legislature particular sentencing standards for felony offenses under the Sentencing Reform Act. The commission is responsible for continuing to recommend appropriate modifications to these standards and to the existing criminal code.

Current Washington law does not require the commission to collect or analyze information regarding sentencing practices in the state, to create a computerized system for recording sentencing information, or to research matters generally relating to improving the criminal justice system.

Summary of Bill: The Sentencing Guidelines Commission shall:

- (1) assist in collecting, preparing, analyzing and disseminating information on state and local sentencing practices;

- (2) develop a computerized system to cover sentencing information on all adult felons; and
- (3) conduct research regarding sentencing guidelines, total confinement and its alternatives, plea bargaining, and other criminal justice matters.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill was passed.

Testimony For: The Sentencing Guidelines Commission's database is the only one that fully addresses adult felon sentencing. The database is used by many levels of government for policy analysis. The commission has served these functions in the past without requiring additional funding, but growing caseloads require funding at this time.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Kathryn Bail, Sentencing Guidelines Commission (pro); and David Fallen, Sentencing Guidelines Commission (pro).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes; Basich; Cooke; Dellwo; Dorn; Dunshee; G. Fisher; Foreman; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Linville; H. Myers; Peery; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Stevens; Talcott; Wang; Wineberry and Wolfe.

Staff: John Woolley (786-7154).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee on Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee on Corrections:

The commission is authorized to provide the services identified in the bill but the language is now changed to be permissive through the use of "may" rather than "shall."

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The bill puts into statute the duties the commission currently undertakes. As the commission is

underfunded, the fiscal note addresses the funding required to fully meet its role as stated in the bill.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Dave Fallen, Executive Director, Sentencing Guidelines Commission.