

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESSB 5903

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Juvenile Justice & Family Law

**Title:** An act relating to juvenile offender sentences.

**Brief Description:** Providing additional sentencing alternatives for juvenile offenders.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Children & Family Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Stevens and Carlson).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Juvenile Justice & Family Law: 4/1/03, 4/3/03 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill**  
**(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Creates two additional sentencing alternatives for juvenile offenders.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE & FAMILY LAW

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Dickerson, Chair; Pettigrew, Vice Chair; Delvin, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Eickmeyer, Hinkle and Upthegrove.

**Staff:** Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

**Background:**

A juvenile offender who is adjudicated of an offense may be given a sentence by the court based on the statutorily available sentencing options. In Washington, the juvenile court may sentence a juvenile offender to a standard range sentence, a sentence outside the standard range, a deferred disposition, a Special Sex Offender Disposition Alternative sentence, or a Chemical Dependency Disposition Alternative sentence.

The majority of the sentences imposed by the juvenile court are standard range sentences. Standard range sentences are calculated based on a grid system using the offender's prior criminal history and the seriousness of the current offense. If the court finds that a

standard range sentence is not appropriate in a specific case the court may impose a statutorily available alternative sentence. The court may impose a manifest injustice sentence outside the standard range if the court has sufficient cause. There may also be alternative sentences which are appropriate such as a Special Sex Offender Disposition Alternative or a Chemical Dependency Disposition Alternative sentence.

If the court imposes a period of confinement as a part of the sentence the juvenile offender may be sentenced to serve the time in a local detention facility if the sentence is of a shorter duration, generally 30 days or less. If the sentence involves a longer period of commitment, the juvenile offender is usually transferred to a Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) facility. The local detention facilities and the JRA facilities may offer different treatment programs.

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### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

Two additional sentencing alternatives are created: a Suspended Disposition Alternative and a Mental Health Disposition Alternative.

#### Suspended Disposition Alternative:

If the offender is subject to a standard range disposition involving confinement by the JRA, the court may impose the standard range and suspend the disposition on condition that the offender comply with one or more local sanctions and any educational or treatment requirements. The treatment programs provided to the offender must be research-based best practice programs as identified by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy or the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee.

If the offender fails to comply with the suspended disposition conditions, the court may order sanctions or revoke the suspended disposition and order the imposition of the original sentence.

An offender is ineligible for the Suspended Disposition Alternative if the offender is:

- (a) Adjudicated of an A+ offense;
- (b) Fourteen years of age or older and is adjudicated of one or more of the following offenses:
  - (i) A class A offense, or an attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit a class A offense;
  - (ii) Manslaughter in the first degree; or
  - (iii) Assault in the second degree, extortion in the first degree, kidnapping in the second degree, robbery in the second degree, residential burglary, burglary in the second degree, drive-by shooting, vehicular homicide, hit-and-run death, intimidating a witness, violation of the Uniform Controlled Substances Act

(RCW 69.50.401(a)(1) (i) or (ii)), or manslaughter II, when the offense includes infliction of bodily harm upon another or when during the commission or immediate withdrawal from the offense the respondent was armed with a deadly weapon;

- (c) Ordered to serve a disposition for a firearm violation; or
- (d) Adjudicated of a sex offense.

Mental Health Disposition Alternative:

If the offender is subject to a standard range disposition of 15 to 65 weeks, the court may impose the standard range or impose the standard range and suspend the disposition on condition that the offender comply with the terms of the Mental Health Disposition Alternative. The offender is required to undergo treatment as a condition of the sentence. The treatment to be provided to the offender shall be chosen from among programs which have been successful in addressing mental health needs of juveniles and successful in mental health treatment of juveniles and identified as research-based best practice programs.

The court may impose the Mental Health Disposition Alternative if the court finds the following:

- (a) The offender has a current diagnosis of an axis I psychiatric disorder, excluding youth that are diagnosed as solely having a conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, substance abuse disorder, paraphilia, or pedophilia;
- (b) An appropriate treatment option is available in the community;
- (c) The plan for the offender identifies and addresses requirements for successful participation and completion of the treatment intervention program; and
- (d) The offender, the offender's family, and the community will benefit from the use of the Mental Health Disposition Alternative.

The court may order a mental health or chemical dependency evaluation to determine if the offender has a designated mental disorder or chemical dependency disorder. The evaluator is to determine if the offender is eligible for research-based treatment. The court may also order a second mental health or chemical dependency evaluation.

If the court determines the Mental Health Disposition Alternative is appropriate, the court shall impose the standard range disposition of up to 65 weeks, suspend execution of the disposition, place the offender on community supervision for up to one year, and impose one or more other local sanctions.

If the offender fails to comply with the terms of the disposition alternative the court may impose sanctions or may revoke the suspended disposition and order the imposition of the original sentence.

Other Provisions:

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy shall develop adherence and outcome standards for measuring effectiveness of treatment programs referred to in the act.

A task force is created for the purpose of examining the coordination of information, education services, and matters of public safety when juvenile offenders are placed into public schools following their conviction.

The bill contains a null and void clause stating that if specific funding for the act is not provided by June 30, 2003 in the Omnibus Appropriations Act, the act is null and void.

**Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:**

The amended bill removes the Community Commitment Disposition Alternative which was contained in the original bill.

The amended bill specifies that the court may order the offender to follow an educational program or treatment requirement as a part of the Suspended Disposition Alternative. The original bill was silent on the ability of the court to specifically require education or treatment as a condition of the sentence.

The bill as amended requires that the treatment programs used under the Suspended Disposition Alternative and the Mental Health Disposition Alternative be research-based best practice programs.

The amended bill adds a new clause that states that the provisions of the act will be null and void if funding is not provided.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not Requested.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the act is null and void if it is not funded in the budget.

**Testimony For:** (Original bill) The bill saves money and improves services to kids. There is no current plan to downsize any institutions. These alternatives are better for

kids. Some kids are better served by keeping them near their families. The JRA does a good job with kids, but some kids best benefit from programs in the community. The kids will eventually return to their communities and it makes sense to reintegrate them by having them near the community where they will be living. The public schools already have kids with serious histories in their schools. Local detention facilities today are not the same as they once were. Today they offer on-site programs for education, chemical dependency, FFT, MST, victim awareness, and many other programs. Kids who are dangerous still go to the JRA. The bill excludes violent offenders. The Senate budget has built-in funding for this.

**Testimony Against:** (Original bill) This bill is very short-sighted. It creates an unfunded mandate to counties. What happens down the road if we close Green Hill School and we don't have enough facilities? One reason to maintain the separate juvenile facilities is because it takes into account the different issues of kids because the different facilities serve different kids. There are concerns with confining juvenile offenders in local facilities for longer periods of time as compared to juvenile institutions which have proven programs. Local facilities are not set up to deal with long-term commitments. They cannot offer the same level of treatment. The institutions are set up to provide research-based programs. Option B does not have specifications requiring research-based interventions. The bill may jeopardize programs we currently have in place like the boot camp. Students are short-changed under this bill. The bill also raises concerns about community safety. If an offender is sent to the local school under one of the alternatives, the school is expected to deal with the student within available resources and this pulls money away from educational funding.

**Testified:** (In support on original bill) Senator Hargrove, prime sponsor; Daniel Erker, Ned Delmore and Bruce Knutson, Washington Association of Juvenile Court Administrators; Deborah Fleck and Paula Casey, Superior Court Judges Association; and Jim Potts, Martin Hall Juvenile Consortium.

(With concerns on original bill) Craig Dwight, Yakima School District; Greg Williamson, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Cheryl Stephanie, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration; Bill Lotto, Lewis County Economic Development Council; David Winger, King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention; Shane Wherry, Maple Lane School; Joe Pope, Association of Washington School Principals; and Jean Wessman, Washington State Association of Counties.

(In opposition on original bill) Representative Boldt; Larry Fehr, Second Chance; Dennis Nugent, Peninsula School District; Heather Highmiller, Chehalis Education Association; Michaela Hoyt, Issaquah School District; Robin Andrea, Naselle School District; Yukiko Yoshida; John Smith; Kevin Prestegard; Paul Nelson, St. Martin's College; Sherry Appleton, Washington Defender Association and Tom McBride, Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.