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**Criminal Justice & Corrections  
Committee**

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**SSB 6308**

**Brief Description:** Creating a joint select committee on offenders programs, sentencing, and supervision.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Carrell, Stevens, Regala, Schoesler, Schmidt, Oke and Rasmussen).

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Establishes a Joint Select Committee on Offenders Programs, Sentencing, and Supervision (Committee).
- Requires the Committee to review the policies relating to earned early release, community custody.
- Requires the Committee to study how and what types of offenders would benefit from enhanced training and education while in prison.

**Hearing Date:** 2/21/06

**Staff:** Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

**Background:**

Under the Sentencing Reform Act, felony offenders receive determinate sentences. A determinate sentence is one where the length of confinement is determined at the time of sentencing; the sentence length generally is not subject to alteration based on events occurring after the sentence is imposed.

The primary exception to this system of determinate sentencing involves the operation of earned early release programs. These programs allow inmates to shorten their sentence length if they display good behavior by participating in work, education, or treatment programs and by not violating prison or jail rules during confinement. However, there are limitations on how much a sentence can be reduced through earned early release both within local jails and state prisons.

**Summary of Bill:**

A Joint Select Committee on Offenders Programs, Sentencing, and Supervision (Committee) is established to review and make recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor regarding earned early release, community custody, and inmate training and education programs operated within state prisons. The Committee must elect a legislative member from the Senate and a member from the House of Representatives to co-chair the Committee.

The Committee consists of one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the president of the Senate, with at least one member being a member of the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee; one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, with at least one member being a member of the House Criminal Justice and Corrections Committee; and representation from the following:

- Office of the Governor;
- Attorney General, or the Attorney General's designee;
- Secretary of the Department of Corrections (DOC), or the secretary's designee, and additional corrections representatives as the Secretary of the DOC deems appropriate;
- Superior Court Judges Association;
- three members, one who provides mental health treatment, one who provides alcohol and substance abuse counseling, and one who provides medical assistance services to offenders. Two of the members must be from the Department of Social and Health Services and one member must be from an outside service provider designated by the Department of Social and Health Services;
- Washington State Association of Counties;
- Association of Washington Cities;
- two members representing crime victims, appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys;
- Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers;
- two faculty members who educate offenders, one of whom educates incarcerated offenders and one who educates released offenders;
- Washington Federation of State Employees representing community corrections officers;
- the labor organization representing correctional officers who work in adult correctional facilities;
- Washington Multifamily Housing Association;
- two members representing local law enforcement, with one representing cities and one representing counties;
- an ex-offender;
- the Sentencing Guidelines Commission;
- a faith-based organization that provides outreach or services to offenders;
- Association of Washington Business;
- a nonprofit organization providing work force training to released offenders; and
- the Washington State Institute for Public Policy who conducts research on corrections programs.

The Committee must review and make recommendations regarding the following issues:

- The type of offender that would benefit most in terms of personal achievement, responsibility, and community safety, by having the opportunity to receive enhanced training and education while in prison;
- The types of training and educational programs that would provide the greatest return on investment with regard to offender achievement, responsibility, and community;
- Changes to the sentencing law and policies related to "good time" or early release, that would encourage incarcerated offenders to participate in training and programs that will increase the likelihood that they will be able to support themselves when they leave prison and reduce recidivism;
- A method for evaluating the return on the investment and determining from front line the DOC staff and community partners, whether the changes are improving personal responsibility on the part of the offender and reducing crime in the community; and
- Changes to community supervision that would provide greater safety to the public and incentives for prisons in adhering to treatment, educational goals, and reducing recidivism.

The Committee must present a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature, including any proposed legislation, by November 15, 2006.

Nonlegislative members of the Committee must serve without compensation, but must be reimbursed for travel expenses. Legislative members of the Committee must be reimbursed for travel expenses as legislative business. The Committee, where feasible, may consult with individuals from the public and private sector and will use legislative facilities and staff from Senate Committee Services and the House of Representatives Office of Program Research.

The act expires December 1, 2006.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 16, 2006.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.