

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6203

As of January 30, 2020

Title: An act relating to corrections.

Brief Description: Concerning corrections.

Sponsors: Senators Darneille, Hasegawa, Nguyen, Das and Wilson, C.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation: 1/21/20.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Codifies the mission, values, and objectives outlined in the Department of Corrections 2019-2023 strategic plan.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, REENTRY & REHABILITATION

Staff: Kelsey-anne Fung (786-7479)

Background: DOC is responsible for the custody of approximately 19,500 individuals in 12 correctional facilities and 14 work release facilities across the state. Each state agency is required to establish quality and productivity objectives for each major activity in its budget. The objectives must be consistent with the missions and goals developed by the agency, and must be expressed in outcome-based, objective, and measurable form. The objectives must specifically address the statutory purpose or intent of a program or activity and focus on data that measure whether the agency is achieving or making progress toward the purpose of the activity and toward statewide priorities.

DOC recently released its 2019-2023 Strategic Plan. Stated goals and missions in the plan include:

- improving public safety by focusing on positively changing lives;
- prioritizing safety and operating a safe and humane corrections system;
- engaging and respecting employees;
- achieving organizational excellence;
- cultivating an environment of integrity and trust;
- promoting respectful and inclusive interactions; and

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

- positivity in words and actions.

Building on prior DOC strategic plans, this plan focuses on people, achieving results, and supporting successful reentry.

There are seven objectives outlined in the plan. Within each objective are specified strategies to achieve a measurable goal by 2023. The objectives are to:

- reduce recidivism by decreasing the first-year rate of return to institutions from 12 percent to 10 percent by 2023;
- improve continuity of health care by establishing continuity of care plans for 40 percent of released incarcerated individuals with a substance use disorder, mental health, or chronic care condition by 2023;
- decrease prison violence by 0.93 to 0.90 per 100 incarcerated individuals at prison facilities by 2022;
- improve reporting and engagement by increasing the rate of supervised individuals reporting from 64 percent to 70 percent by 2023;
- focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, and respect by increasing the equity, diversity, inclusion, and respect index from 59 percent to 63 percent by 2023;
- manage capacity by providing full and partial confinement options within 100 percent of capacity by 2023; and
- establish integrated outcome-based management in 100 percent of divisions by 2020.

The Office of the Corrections Ombuds. The Office of the Corrections Ombuds (OCO) was created in 2018 as an independent and impartial office to provide information to inmates and their families; promote public awareness and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of inmates; identify system issues and responses for the Governor and the Legislature to act upon; and ensure compliance with relevant statutes, rules, and policies pertaining to corrections facilities, services, and treatment of inmates under the jurisdiction of DOC. In its 2019 annual report, OCO recommended aligning and identifying the goals and priorities of DOC toward rehabilitation and reentry by changing the name of DOC to Department of Rehabilitation and Reentry, changing the legislative intent established for DOC in statute, and changing the mission statement.

Summary of Bill: DOC's 2019-2023 strategic plan is codified. The stated intent of the Legislature is to establish a comprehensive system of rehabilitation and reentry for persons experiencing incarceration within the state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Supportive of DOC's long process to shift focus on punishment to reflect modern day sensibilities in the way society approaches DOC's work to not just be incarceration but preparing individuals for their return to the community.

The mission statement gets to the heart about how the agency will be effective as a system and provide services and training to produce better outcomes and reduce recidivism. The language that places DOC's focus on rehabilitation and reentry to positively change lives is a huge important philosophical shift. Research shows that recidivism declines and public safety is increased when society invests in creating opportunities and hope for those incarcerated. It takes incentives to produce cognitive behavioral change and DOC needs to embrace that methodology to have better outcomes. DOC wants to add language to include those who are supervised by DOC but who may never have been incarcerated. DOC wants to move away from labeling people that hinders their ability to do better. Remorse is part of an individual's own thought process and responsibility but already know what works is helping people understand their own behavior and what their role was in the crime. DOC's programs focus on helping individuals realize how external influences or behavioral learning experiences from early life affected life choices that caused the individual to be incarcerated in the first place.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jeannie Darneille, Prime Sponsor; Steve Sinclair, Secretary of DOC; Melena Thompson, Policy Director, DOC.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.