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**HOUSE BILL 2169**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Mosbrucker, Goodman, Leavitt, Simmons, Ormsby, Graham, Callan, Rule, Cheney, and Davis

Prefiled 01/05/24. Read first time 01/08/24. Referred to Committee on Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry.

1 AN ACT Relating to a pilot program creating a healthier  
2 environment for correctional officers, department of corrections  
3 staff, and individuals within a correctional facility; adding a new  
4 section to chapter 72.09 RCW; creating a new section; and providing  
5 an expiration date.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature recognizes that  
8 incarceration has negative physical and mental health impacts on  
9 correctional officers, department of corrections staff, and  
10 incarcerated individuals. Nationally, the average life expectancy of  
11 a correctional officer is 59 years old, which is 16 years shorter  
12 than those who do not work in corrections. Further, the legislature  
13 recognizes that suicide rates for correctional officers are 39  
14 percent higher than the national working age population. Incarcerated  
15 individuals experience more illness than those who are not  
16 incarcerated. The legislature finds that a more normal and overall  
17 healthier environment while incarcerated better prepares people for  
18 reentry and helps ensure that the prison environment is not harmful  
19 to the people who work there.

20 (2) Therefore, the legislature intends to create a pilot program  
21 that will improve the working conditions for department of

1 corrections staff and a healthier environment for the incarcerated  
2 population to focus on reentering communities with the tools needed  
3 to be successful. The legislature intends for the program to reduce  
4 risks identified by the department including preventing violent  
5 behavior that harms members of the public, reducing recidivism,  
6 reducing stress and therefore improving health outcomes for  
7 department staff and incarcerated individuals, improving security  
8 within department facilities, improving communication and voluntary  
9 compliance with infectious disease control measures, reducing  
10 employee illness and injury, reducing violence among incarcerated  
11 individuals and against department staff, and improving recruitment  
12 and retention of a qualified workforce.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 72.09  
14 RCW to read as follows:

15 (1)(a) The department shall establish a four-year pilot program  
16 at the Washington state penitentiary east complex with the goals of  
17 improved communication between correctional officers, department  
18 staff, and incarcerated individuals and reducing recidivism.

19 (b) The department shall select contact officers to act as  
20 mentors and coaches to encourage prosocial behaviors, provide advice,  
21 direction, and support to incarcerated individuals to change their  
22 lives and behaviors for the better through their continuum of  
23 reentry.

24 (c) The department shall train correctional officers in the pilot  
25 program on dynamic security tactics. Dynamic security must improve  
26 the relationship between incarcerated individuals and correctional  
27 staff. Certain officers may also receive specialized competency-  
28 based, programmatic training in individual and team-based crisis de-  
29 escalation.

30 (d) The department shall initiate appropriate improvement efforts  
31 so that the work environment for corrections officers, including  
32 staff decompression rooms, and life while incarcerated resembles life  
33 in the community to the highest extent possible. Improvement of the  
34 east complex may include painting and planting programs.

35 (2) The secretary shall adopt any rules and policies necessary to  
36 implement the requirements of this section.

37 (3) By December 1st each year, and in compliance with RCW  
38 43.01.036, the department shall submit a report to the governor and  
39 the legislature on:

1 (a) The number of correctional officers, department staff, and  
2 incarcerated individuals participating in the pilot program and a  
3 summary of improvement projects undertaken.

4 (b) Patterns and any effects on behaviors and participation by  
5 correctional officers, department staff, and incarcerated  
6 individuals.

7 (c) Differential outcomes for correctional officers, department  
8 staff, and incarcerated individuals participating in the pilot  
9 program compared with correctional officers, department staff, and  
10 individuals not participating in the pilot program.

11 (d) Recidivism outcomes for those individuals that participated  
12 in the pilot program while incarcerated, including arrests, charges,  
13 and convictions.

14 (4) This section expires June 30, 2030.

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