
HOUSE BILL 2287

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By Representatives Farivar, Goodman, Simmons, Chopp, Nance, Street, Davis, Ortiz-Self, Ramel, Peterson, and Ormsby

Read first time 01/10/24. Referred to Committee on Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating an advisory board to the office of
2 the corrections ombuds; adding a new section to chapter 43.06C RCW;
3 and creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature created the office of the
6 corrections ombuds to serve as an independent and impartial entity to
7 provide oversight, monitoring, and investigation into issues arising
8 within the state's prisons. It was also created to help strengthen
9 procedures and practices that promote the health, safety, welfare,
10 and rehabilitation of incarcerated individuals and reduce the
11 exposure of the department of corrections to litigation. To ensure
12 that the office's work remains focused on addressing the needs of
13 currently incarcerated people, the legislature hereby creates an
14 advisory board composed of community stakeholders, including current
15 and formerly incarcerated people, to provide advice and feedback to
16 the ombuds.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.06C
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1)(a) By December 1, 2024, and subject to the availability of
20 amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the governor shall

1 convene an ombuds advisory board with several purposes in support of
2 the ombuds function. The board shall work with the ombuds to create
3 and participate in a priority setting process. The board shall
4 receive briefings or reports from the ombuds relating to deidentified
5 data, trends, and other relevant issues, and make recommendations to
6 the ombuds regarding the accomplishment of its purposes. The board
7 does not participate in any ombuds investigations and is not
8 authorized to receive records that are confidential pursuant to RCW
9 43.06C.060.

10 (b) The board may issue its own annual report that provides the
11 governor and legislature with recommendations regarding the ombuds
12 performance, budget, and changes in the law that would enhance ombuds
13 effectiveness.

14 (2) Upon each vacancy and during original creation of the board,
15 the ombuds may provide the governor recommendations for appointment
16 to the board. The governor may consider these recommendations when
17 making appointments.

18 (3) The board initially consists of the following members:

19 (a) Two currently incarcerated individuals, one from the men's
20 division and one from the women's division, who have served at least
21 five years of incarceration and have at least five years left on
22 their sentence;

23 (b) Two formerly incarcerated individuals, one from the men's
24 division and one from the women's division, who have served at least
25 five years of incarceration and have reintegrated recently into the
26 community;

27 (c) Two family members who have been affected by incarceration;

28 (d) A community member with extensive knowledge and experience in
29 issues related to racial, ethnic, or religious diversity within the
30 correctional system;

31 (e) A community member with extensive knowledge and experience in
32 the accommodation needs of individuals with disabilities;

33 (f) A community member with extensive knowledge and experience in
34 reentry supports or reentry programming;

35 (g) A community member with a medical background; and

36 (h) A community member with a gender responsive background.

37 (4) After the full membership is attained, the board shall
38 develop a process for replacing members in case of resignation or
39 expiration of terms.

1 (5) Board members serve a term of two years, except that the
2 board shall create and implement a system of staggered terms, and no
3 member may serve more than two consecutive terms. The board will
4 designate two cochairs by vote, and one must be currently or formerly
5 incarcerated.

6 (6) Eligible members of the board, including incarcerated
7 individuals, shall receive stipends according to RCW 43.03.220. The
8 department of corrections shall work with the office of the
9 corrections ombuds to develop a process where currently incarcerated
10 and eligible board members may be paid stipends for their
11 participation.

12 (7) The board shall convene at least quarterly.

13 (8) The board is subject to the open public meetings act, chapter
14 42.30 RCW.

15 (9) The office shall provide administrative and clerical
16 assistance to the board.

17 (10) Board members must complete training to utilize an
18 antiracist lens in their duties as board members.

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