

RCW 72.09.400 Work ethic camp program—Findings—Intent. The legislature finds that high crime rates and a heightened sense of vulnerability have led to increased public pressure on criminal justice officials to increase offender punishment and remove the most dangerous criminals from the streets. As a result, there is unprecedented growth in the corrections populations and overcrowding of prisons and local jails. Skyrocketing costs and high rates of recidivism have become issues of major public concern. Attention must be directed towards implementing a long-range corrections strategy that focuses on inmate responsibility through intensive work ethic training.

The legislature finds that many offenders lack basic life skills and have been largely unaffected by traditional correctional philosophies and programs. In addition, many first-time offenders who enter the prison system learn more about how to be criminals than the important qualities, values, and skills needed to successfully adapt to a life without crime.

The legislature finds that opportunities for offenders to improve themselves are extremely limited and there has not been adequate emphasis on alternatives to total confinement for nonviolent offenders.

The legislature finds that the explosion of drug crimes since the inception of the sentencing reform act and the response of the criminal justice system have resulted in a much higher proportion of substance abuse-affected offenders in the state's prisons and jails. The needs of this population differ from those of other offenders and present a great challenge to the system. The problems are exacerbated by the shortage of drug treatment and counseling programs both in and outside of prisons.

The legislature finds that the concept of a work ethic camp that requires the offender to complete an appropriate and balanced combination of highly structured and goal-oriented work programs such as correctional industries based work camps and/or class I and class II work projects, drug rehabilitation, and intensive life management work ethic training, can successfully reduce offender recidivism and lower the overall cost of incarceration.

It is the purpose and intent of RCW 72.09.400 through *72.09.420, 9.94A.690, and **section 5, chapter 338, Laws of 1993 to implement a regimented work ethic camp that is designed to directly address the high rate of recidivism, reduce upwardly spiraling prison costs, preserve scarce and high cost prison space for the most dangerous offenders, and provide judges with a tough and sound alternative to traditional incarceration without compromising public safety. [1993 c 338 § 1.]

Reviser's note: *(1) RCW 72.09.420 was repealed by 1998 c 273 § 1.

** (2) 1993 c 338 § 5 was vetoed by the governor.

Severability—1993 c 338: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1993 c 338 § 8.]

Effective date—1993 c 338: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or

support of the state government and its existing public institutions,
and shall take effect July 1, 1993." [1993 c 338 § 9.]

Sentencing: RCW 9.94A.690.