
SENATE BILL 5409

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators C. Wilson, Boehnke, Hasegawa, Nobles, Saldaña, and Trudeau

Read first time 01/22/25. Referred to Committee on Human Services.

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 correctional 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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