
Public Safety Committee

HB 1715

Brief Description: Concerning the membership of the sentencing guidelines commission.

Sponsors: Representatives Mosbrucker, Simmons, Robertson, Wicks, Callan, Ramos and Griffey.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adds four voting members and makes other changes to the membership of the Sentencing Guidelines Commission.

Hearing Date: 1/14/22

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

The Sentencing Guidelines Commission (SGC) serves to advise the Governor and the Legislature as necessary on issues relating to adult and juvenile sentencing. The SGC consists of 20 voting members. Aside from ex officio members, voting members are appointed to three-year terms by the Governor and are subject to confirmation by the Senate. In making appointments, the Governor must endeavor to assure that the SGC membership includes adequate representation and expertise relating to both the adult criminal justice system and the juvenile justice system.

The SGC's voting membership includes:

- the head of the state agency having general responsibility for adult correctional programs, as an ex officio member;
- the Director of Financial Management, or a designee, as an ex officio member;
- the Chair of the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board, as an ex officio member;

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- the head of the state agency, or designee, having responsibility for juvenile corrections programs, as an ex officio member;
- two prosecuting attorneys;
- two attorneys with particular expertise in defense work;
- four superior court judges;
- a chief law enforcement officer of a city or county;
- four members of the public who are not prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, or law enforcement officers, one of whom is a victim of crime or a crime victims' advocate;
- an elected official of a county government, other than a prosecuting attorney or sheriff;
- an elected official of a city government; and
- an administrator of juvenile court services.

The SGC also includes four Legislators serving two-year terms as nonvoting members, one from each of the two largest caucuses in each chamber.

Summary of Bill:

Four voting member positions are added to the SGC. The additional members include: the Chair of the State Supreme Court Minority and Justice Commission, or designee, as an ex officio member; a person representing the interests of tribes; a behavioral health professional with experience working in the criminal justice system; and a person with knowledge and expertise in academic research in the field of criminology or sociology. Additionally, one of the four current positions designated for members of the public must be a person who has been formerly incarcerated in the state correctional system.

Initial appointment terms are staggered for the member representing the interests of tribes, the member who is a behavioral health professional, and the member who is an academic research expert. When appointing the academic research expert, the Governor must seek recommendations of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy and relevant departments of Washington State University and the University of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 5, 2022.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.