
SUBSTITUTE SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8418

State of Washington

56th Legislature

2000 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Judiciary (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Heavey, Kohl-Welles, Long, Franklin and Kline)

Read first time 1/25/00.

1 WHEREAS, RCW 9.94A.040(2)(a) directs the Sentencing Guidelines
2 Commission to evaluate state sentencing policy, to include whether the
3 sentencing ranges and standards are consistent with and further the
4 purposes of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1981, and the intent of the
5 legislature to emphasize confinement for the violent offender and
6 alternatives to confinement for the nonviolent offender; and

7 WHEREAS, RCW 9.94A.040(2) (b) and (c) directs the Sentencing
8 Guidelines Commission to recommend to the legislature revisions or
9 modifications to the standard sentencing ranges, state sentencing
10 policy, prosecuting standards, and other standards, as well as to the
11 existing criminal code; and if implementation of the revisions or
12 modifications would result in exceeding the capacity of correctional
13 facilities, then the commission is directed to accompany its
14 recommendation with an additional list of standard sentence ranges
15 which are consistent with correction capacity; and

16 WHEREAS, Since its adoption, numerous changes have been made in the
17 Sentencing Reform Act, resulting in substantial increases in the
18 lengths of prison sentences and in the population of the state's
19 prisons, which presently exceed both rated and operational capacity;
20 and

1 WHEREAS, Current fiscal constraints on state and local governments
2 demand the most cost-effective use of tax dollars for all purposes, and
3 prison construction and operation are the most expensive components of
4 the criminal justice system and must be used wisely in order to allow
5 adequate funding of other public services and programs and to achieve
6 maximum public safety per dollar spent; and

7 WHEREAS, Studies are now available, including those conducted by
8 the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, which demonstrate the
9 cost-effectiveness of various custody options in terms of savings of
10 future crime victim and criminal justice system costs by reducing
11 recidivism;

12 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Senate of the State of
13 Washington, the House of Representatives concurring, That the
14 Sentencing Guidelines Commission shall conduct a comprehensive review
15 and evaluation of state sentencing policy, including whether current
16 sentencing ranges and standards, as well as existing mandatory minimum
17 sentences and existing sentence enhancements, are consistent with the
18 purposes of the Sentencing Reform Act as set out in RCW 9.94A.010, with
19 the intent of the legislature to emphasize confinement for the violent
20 offender and alternatives to confinement for the nonviolent offender,
21 and whether current sentencing ranges and standards are consistent with
22 existing corrections capacity. Such review and evaluation shall
23 include consideration of cost-effectiveness and other studies performed
24 by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, as well as the
25 fiscal impact of sentencing policies on state and local government; and

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That in conducting the review and
27 evaluation, the commission shall consult with the Superior Court
28 Judges' Association, the Washington Association of Prosecuting
29 Attorneys, the Washington Defenders' Association, the Washington
30 Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Washington Association of
31 Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, organizations representing crime victims,
32 and other organizations and individuals with expertise and interest in
33 sentencing policy; and

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That by December 1, 2001, the commission
35 shall present to the legislature the report of its comprehensive review
36 and evaluation, together with its recommendations for revisions and
37 modifications to state sentencing policy, including sentencing ranges
38 and standards, mandatory minimum sentences, and sentence enhancements;
39 and

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That if implementation of the
2 recommendations of the commission would result in exceeding the
3 capacity of correctional facilities, the commission shall at the same
4 time present to the legislature a list of revised standard sentence
5 ranges which are consistent with currently authorized rated and
6 operational corrections capacity, and consistent with the purposes of
7 the Sentencing Reform Act.

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