

5419

Sponsor(s): Senators Patterson, Long, Hargrove, Kline, Winsley and Kohl-Welles

Brief Description: Providing chemical dependency treatment for certain offenders.

SB 5419 - DIGEST

(SEE ALSO PROPOSED 2ND SUB)

Finds and declares that:

(1) Substance abuse treatment is a proven public safety and health measure. Nonviolent, drug-dependent criminal offenders who receive chemical dependency treatment are much less likely to abuse drugs and commit future crimes, and are more likely to live healthier, more stable, and more productive lives;

(2) Community safety and health are promoted, and taxpayer dollars are saved, when nonviolent persons convicted of drug possession or drug use are provided appropriate community-based treatment instead of incarceration;

(3) In 1996, Arizona voters by a 2-1 margin passed the drug medicalization, prevention, and control act, which diverted nonviolent drug offenders into chemical dependency treatment and education services rather than incarceration. According to a report prepared by the Arizona supreme court, the Arizona law is "resulting in safer communities and more substance abusing probationers in recovery," has already saved state taxpayers millions of dollars, and is helping more than seventy-five percent of program participants to remain drug free.

Declares the purpose and intent in enacting this act to be as follows:

(1) To enhance public safety by reducing drug-related crime and preserving jails and prison cells for serious and violent offenders, and to improve public health by reducing drug abuse and drug dependence through proven and effective chemical dependency treatment strategies;

(2) To halt the wasteful expenditure of millions of dollars each year on the incarceration and reincarceration of nonviolent drug users who would be better served by community-based treatment; and

(3) To divert from incarceration into community-based substance abuse treatment programs nonviolent drug offenders and offenders under supervision in the community convicted of simple drug possession or drug use offenses.