

SB 5952-S.E - DIGEST

(AS OF SENATE 2ND READING 6/29/17)

Creates the office of the corrections ombuds for the purpose of: (1) Providing information to inmates, family members, representatives of inmates, department of corrections employees, and others regarding the rights of inmates;

(2) Providing technical assistance to support inmate self-advocacy;

(3) Identifying systemic issues and responses for the governor and the legislature to act upon;

(4) Reporting to the legislature; and

(5) Ensuring compliance with relevant statutes, rules, and policies pertaining to conditions of correctional facilities, services, and treatment of inmates under the jurisdiction of the department.

Requires the governor to convene an ombuds advisory council with several purposes in support of the ombuds function.

Requires the department of commerce to designate the nonprofit organization that will contract to operate the office of the corrections ombuds.

Requires the department of corrections to: (1) If it has actual knowledge or reason to believe that a computer calculation error is or has caused an error in the calculation of the release date for a prisoner, immediately manually calculate the release date of that prisoner as well as the release date of similarly sentenced prisoners; and

(2) Develop a mandatory sentencing elements worksheet in consultation with the administrative office of the courts, superior court judges' association, Washington association of prosecuting attorneys, Washington association of criminal defense lawyers, Washington public defender association, and Washington association of county clerks.

Requires the joint legislative audit and review committee to conduct a performance audit of the information technology and records related units at the department of corrections.

Requires the sentencing guidelines commission to contract for the services of one or more external consultants to evaluate the state's sentencing laws and practices.

Creates a joint legislative task force to simplify criminal sentencing to review sentencing laws after consideration of the consultant's study and his or her recommendations.

Requires the office of financial management, in the contract for the next regularly scheduled performance audit, to require the audit to review the ability of department of

corrections employees to use the state employee whistleblower program.