

MINUTES  
JOINT MEETING

**HOUSE JUDICIARY, RULES & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE  
SENATE JUDICIARY & RULES COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, January 27, 2020

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Lincoln Auditorium, WW02

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Chaney, Acting Vice Chairman Monks, Representatives Kerby, Amador, Zito, Zollinger, Ehardt, Scott, Goesling, Hartgen, Marshall, Ricks, Troy, Young, Gannon, McCrostie, Wintrow, Davis

Chairman Lakey, Vice Chairman Lee, Senators Lodge, Anthon, Thayn, Grow, Cheatham, Burgoyne, Nye

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** None

**GUESTS:** The sign-in sheets will be retained with the minutes in the Committee secretary's office until the end of the session. Following the end of the session, the sign-in sheets will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

**Chairman Chaney** called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

**Josh Tewalt**, Director of the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC), gave an update on the corrections system in Idaho, beginning with an overview. The flow of inmates starts in the county jails where almost all enter the system. They come in as newly sentenced, violators, and retained jurisdiction. They are assessed on entry to know how to help them and where to place them. The department offers programs for; thinking through a change, substance abuse, sex offender, aggression replacement, and advanced skills practice. Nothing helps more than education to deter recidivism. IDOC's goals are to reduce crime, improve success for staff and people in their care, reduce spending and increase confidence in IDOC. They are working on a balance of accountability and intervention.

IDOC faces the challenge of how difficult the environment is on staff. PTSD is ten times greater with correctional employees than with combat veterans. Other challenges faced are revolving clientele, unprecedented prison growth, and aging infrastructure not meeting prisoners needs. One solution that is not a long-term solution is out of state placement.

IDOC's first goal is to improve community outcomes with connection and intervention stations that provide intervention and accountability at the cost of \$4.5 million investment. New positions have been made, probation and parole specialists, that will provide administrative support to keeps officers connected with people they supervise. IDOC is piloting dosage probation, expanding a GPS monitoring program, contracting urinalysis testing, creating reentry savings accounts and helping with targeted transitional funding. The transitional funding is being piloted to provide housing solutions. IDOC is also working to prepare them better to adjust from prison environment to real world experiences.

The next part of IDOC's goal is to increase bed capacity. The short-term plan is to add 810 new beds. Mid-term plan is to continue to increase bed capacity. The long-term goal is to invest in infrastructure improvements to enhance efficiency of existing facilities. From a policy standpoint the best way for legislatures to be involved is to come and see the facilities, the reentry centers, and meet the staff and the people in IDOC's supervision.

**Chairman Chaney** explained this is the first of two meetings. Public testimony will be considered on Wednesday. Today was designed to be a conversation between the committee and the director.

Answering the committees concerns, **Mr. Tewalt** explained that 98% of people are returning into the community, so the question shouldn't be if they are coming, but when and how can we help them transition. There are policy decisions that need to be done to give offenders tools to be successful. In answer to committee concerns, Mr. Tewalt discussed the issue of using county beds, instead of state facilities for long-term prisoners. Unless there is a change in state law, counties cannot refuse inmates.

**Mr. Tewalt** explained to the committee that he does not know the impact that Medicaid expansion will have in the correctional department, but they are hopeful it will be beneficial. In answer to committee concerns of sexual assault in incarceration, IDOC has zero tolerance and has increased training opportunities, and has made it clear that there is an avenue for confidential reporting. With committee concerns that county jails are being under-utilized while IDOC is increasing out of state placements, Mr. Tewalt explained they are working to evaluate what how counties would like their beds to be used. The other discussion is if it is cheaper out of state than in county jails, that issue needs to be discussed. IDOC is also trying to watch quality control with contracts outside of the state. In answer to concerns of Idaho Correctional Industries, Mr. Tewalt feels that the right people are being hired, focusing on outcome instead of bottom line and they are preparing people to leave the correctional facilities and transition into the community.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

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Representative Chaney  
Chair

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Wendy Carver-Herbert  
Secretary