

MINUTES
JOINT MEETING
SENATE JUDICIARY & RULES COMMITTEE
HOUSE JUDICIARY, RULES & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, January 27, 2020

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: WW02

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Lakey, Vice Chairman Lee, Senators Lodge, Anthon, Thayn, Grow, Cheatham, Burgoyne, and Nye

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

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Chairman Chaney** called the meeting of the Joint Judiciary and Rules Committee (Committee) to order at 1:30 p.m.

PRESENTATION: **Idaho Department of Correction Annual Presentation. Josh Tewalt**, Director, Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC), began with a brief overview of the presentation.

Director Tewalt stated that IDOC is responsible for managing felon offenders held in prisons, and supervising offenders on probation and parole. He explained that there are over 26,000 offenders in Idaho: 9,473 are incarcerated and 16,700 are on probation and parole. In addition, he gave a brief summary of the procedures on the movements of offenders in prison. **Director Tewalt** stated IDOC assesses offenders upon their entry to the facility, groups them according to their needs, and recommends programs for rehabilitation. He mentioned that IDOC offers five core programs to help the offenders in their rehabilitation: cognitive and behavioral programs, substance abuse programs, a sex offenders program, the aggressive replacement therapy program, and advanced skills practice. He emphasized that offering education opportunities to the inmates is the most effective way to help them be successful upon their release from prison.

Director Tewalt presented the ongoing plan to improve IDOC. He highlighted that IDOC's goals are to reduce crime for public safety, improve success of the staff and those within their custody, reduce spending, and increase confidence in IDOC. As part of IDOC's strategic planning, **Director Tewalt** identified increase of parole and probation violations, rise of prison growth, and aging infrastructure as three challenges IDOC experiences.

Director Tewalt stated that IDOC developed measures to address those challenges. He emphasized IDOC's focus on improving community outcomes and upgrading its correctional facilities. He added that improvement of community outcomes would entail strengthening offender supervision, improving the administrative support to the offenders, and more funding in treatment programs and technology, both within the community and in prison. He emphasized that concern for a growing prison population over the past few years led them to increase bed capacity in the facilities. **Director Tewalt** explained these improvements will enhance the efficiency of the existing facilities.

DISCUSSION: In response to Committee questions, **Director Tewalt** gave an overview of IDOCs role and its objectives. He stated that IDOC is responsible for the supervision of offenders through safety, accountability, and providing opportunities for offender rehabilitation. He also added that IDOC prepares the offenders for their successful return to society. He pointed out that IDOC has developed measures aimed at reducing corrections spending and determining the effectiveness of programs for the people in their custody.

In response to Committee questions, **Director Tewalt** discussed the increase in the prison population in recent years. With the growing number of people in correctional facilities, **Director Tewalt** indicated that IDOC uses county jails and out-of-state facilities to house inmates. **Director Tewalt** responded to a question from Senator Burgoyne that county jails are required to accept state prison inmates. He emphasized that out-of-state placement is not a plan, just immediate relief. He assured the Committee that there is an ongoing discussion on insufficient prison space for inmates.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Chaney** adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.

Senator Todd M. Lakey
Committee Chairman

Sharon Pennington
Committee Secretary

Rellie Wisdom
Majority Staff Assistant