
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2287

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By House Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry (originally sponsored by Representatives Farivar, Goodman, Simmons, Chopp, Nance, Street, Davis, Ortiz-Self, Ramel, Peterson, and Ormsby)

1 AN ACT Relating to creating an advisory board to the office of
2 the corrections ombuds; adding a new section to chapter 43.06C RCW;
3 and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature created the office of the
6 corrections ombuds to serve as an independent and impartial entity to
7 provide oversight, monitoring, and investigation into issues arising
8 within the state's prisons. It was also created to help strengthen
9 procedures and practices that promote the health, safety, welfare,
10 and rehabilitation of incarcerated individuals and reduce the
11 exposure of the department of corrections to litigation. To ensure
12 that the office's work remains focused on addressing the needs of
13 currently incarcerated people, the legislature hereby creates an
14 advisory board composed of community stakeholders, including current
15 and formerly incarcerated people, to provide advice and feedback to
16 the ombuds.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.06C
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 (1)(a) By December 1, 2024, and subject to the availability of
20 amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the governor shall

1 convene an ombuds advisory board with several purposes in support of
2 the ombuds function. The board shall help the ombuds create a
3 priority setting process and will provide input on priorities to the
4 ombuds each year. The board shall receive briefings or reports from
5 the ombuds relating to deidentified data, trends, and other relevant
6 issues, and make recommendations to the ombuds regarding the
7 accomplishment of its purposes. The board does not participate in any
8 ombuds investigations and is not authorized to receive records that
9 are confidential pursuant to RCW 43.06C.060 and 43.06C.080.

10 (b) The board may issue its own annual report that provides the
11 governor and legislature with recommendations regarding the ombuds
12 performance, budget, and changes in the law that would enhance ombuds
13 effectiveness.

14 (2)(a) The governor shall appoint the members of the board. The
15 ombuds may provide the governor recommendations for appointment to
16 the board. The governor may consider these recommendations when
17 making appointments. The board shall consist of the following 11
18 members:

19 (i) One person currently incarcerated in medium or close custody
20 at the department of corrections men's division;

21 (ii) One person currently incarcerated in medium or close custody
22 at the department of corrections women's division;

23 (iii) One person currently incarcerated at the department of
24 corrections who was sentenced to a term of life imprisonment;

25 (iv) Two persons who were formerly incarcerated in medium or
26 close custody at the department of corrections;

27 (v) Two family members of persons who are currently or were
28 formerly incarcerated at the department of corrections;

29 (vi) A community member with knowledge and experience in issues
30 related to racial, ethnic, or religious diversity within the
31 department of corrections correctional system;

32 (vii) A community member with knowledge and experience in the
33 accommodation needs of individuals with disabilities;

34 (viii) A community member with a gender responsive background;
35 and

36 (ix) A licensed health care provider, who preferably has
37 knowledge and experience in behavioral health care.

38 (b) In appointing persons to serve on the board, the governor
39 shall strive to reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of persons
40 incarcerated at the department of corrections.

1 (3) After the full membership is attained, vacancies on the board
2 shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

3 (4) Board members serve a term of two years, except that the
4 board shall create and implement a system of staggered terms, and no
5 member may serve more than two consecutive terms. The board will
6 designate two cochairs by vote, and one must be currently or formerly
7 incarcerated.

8 (5) Eligible members of the board, including persons currently
9 incarcerated, shall receive stipends according to RCW 43.03.220. The
10 department of corrections shall work with the office of the
11 corrections ombuds to develop a process where currently incarcerated
12 and eligible board members may be paid stipends for their
13 participation.

14 (6) The board shall convene at least quarterly.

15 (7) The board is subject to the open public meetings act, chapter
16 42.30 RCW.

17 (8) The office shall provide administrative and clerical
18 assistance to the board.

19 (9) Board members must complete training to utilize an antiracist
20 lens in their duties as board members.

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