

MINUTES OF THE SENATE FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pete Brungardt at 10:40 a.m. on Tuesday, January 18, 2005, in Room 231-N of the Capitol.

Committee members absent: Senator Anthony Hensley (E)

Committee staff present: Athena Andaya, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dennis Hodgins, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Mary Ann Torrence, Revisor of Statutes Office
Dee Woodson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Roger Werholtz, Secretary of Corrections
Patti Biggs, Executive Director of the Kansas Sentencing Commission
Chuck Simmons, Department of Corrections

Others attending: See attached list.

Chairman Brungardt explained that oversight for the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) was now the assigned responsibility of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee, whereas before this year it had been under the Senate Judiciary Committee. He said that today's presentation by KDOC Secretary, Roger Werholtz and members of his staff, would be an introductory session for what goes on within that Department, the people involved, what they do, and how they do it.

Secretary Werholtz introduced Patti Biggs, Kansas Sentencing Commission, to give an overview of the population projections that the state and KDOC use to accomplish planning and build their budgets. Ms. Biggs reviewed the 2005 Prison Population Projections that were done for the adult incarcerated system, and the simulation model utilized to derive the population projections. She said it had two major driving factors; number and type of admissions coming into the prison system and length of stay for the offenders at the various levels of incarceration. She explained that the methodology used for the model is a Monte Carlo Simulation which uses a combination of probabilistic modeling and simulation of system movement. The two sources of information used for the modeling is the prior year's data which is the actual experience for FY 2004 and the assumptions used by a Consensus Group. (Attachment 1)

Ms. Biggs included in her presentation Prison Population Characteristics, Prison Population Trends, and Prison Admission Trends explaining each chart thoroughly. She reviewed the actual and projected prison population, and interpreted the statistics as depicted in the displayed charts and graphs. Ms. Biggs also explained Model Monitoring in relationship to gender and custody. The Kansas Prison System is near capacity in several areas, and projections indicate the need for more beds in the near future.

Secretary Werholtz reviewed the current status of prison population and gave some comparative data regarding how Kansas ranks with other states regarding prison correctional issues. His testimony included pie charts depicting Inmate Population by Offense Grouping and Gender as of June 30, 2004. He also included a map of the correctional facility locations throughout Kansas as of June 30, 2003. He noted that there were twelve different cities where correctional facilities are located, but operate the prisons under eight administrative units. (Attachment 2)

Secretary Werholtz introduced Chuck Simmons to give a review and update on the custody Classification System. Mr. Simmons explained that the purpose of the classification system used by the KDOC is to provide a means to assess relative risks they present to themselves, other inmates, staff, and the community, based upon a standard set of objective criteria. He added that the underlying intent of the classification system is to maintain the individual at the least restrictive level of supervision possible, given the level of risk to the system. Mr. Simmons said the new classification system is resulting in more medium and minimum classifications. This affects space because maximum security inmates must be single beds per cell; whereas medium and minimum inmates are shared cells. (Attachment 3)

Mr. Simmons said the current classification system consists of eleven objective point-based criteria and one non-point based risk criteria which are outlined in his written testimony. He told the Committee that

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the assessment instrument was validated upon implementation in 1980. He stated that in February 2004, the Secretary of Corrections appointed a task group to review the Inmate Custody Classification Instrument. Mr. Simmons explained that the task group was comprised of staff from each of the KDOC's eight correctional facilities and from the department's Facilities management division, IT division and research Unit. The data analysis has been completed, and if adopted, programming may begin as soon as April 2005. The revised classification system is expected to be operational no later than January 1, 2006. The new classification system could effect 90 inmates in shifting how they are housed.

Secretary Werholtz presented capacity expansion options and recommendations. He explained housing expansion options and estimated operating and construction costs as outlined in a spreadsheet disseminated to committee members. He spoke briefly on the InterChange Freedom Initiative, which involves a special programs facility at Ellsworth. He said that a greater release of drug possession inmates (SB 123), more people monitored by Community Corrections, parole and other factors have resulted in fewer inmates than projected this year. (Attachment 4)

Secretary Werholtz stated that the new classifications and lower number of entrants have temporarily relieved the need for added beds this year. A two year lag will be needed to complete any new buildings for occupancy. He said that a minimum classification facility at Ellsworth and a maximum (or medium) wing at El Dorado are the most likely additions to the system. He also presented cost figures and estimates for the various additions at different sites.

Due to time restraints on committee meeting time, Chairman Brungardt announced that the remaining portion of KDOC's presentation would have to be rescheduled for another meeting date.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for January 19, 2005, at 10:30 a.m.