

One Hundred Third Legislature - Second Session - 2014

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB999

Chairperson: Senator Brad Ashford

Committee: Judiciary

Date of Hearing: February 06, 2014

The following constitutes the reasons for this bill and the purposes which are sought to be accomplished thereby:

The purpose of LB999 is to build upon the history of the Community Corrections Act of 2003, with the goal of increasing public safety by reducing the threat of harm by released offenders and increasing offender success by fostering effective risk management, accountability for both offender and system officials, and community and victim participation.

The Community Corrections Act of 2003 provided for the development and establishment of community-based facilities and programs in Nebraska for adult offenders and encouraged the use of such facilities and programs by sentencing courts and the Board of Parole as alternatives to incarceration or re-incarceration in order to reduce prison overcrowding and enhance offender supervision in the community. The Community Corrections Council served the interests of society by promoting the rehabilitation of offenders and deterring offenders from engaging in further criminal activity, by making community-based facilities and programs available to adult offenders while emphasizing offender culpability, offender accountability, and public safety and reducing reliance upon incarceration as a means of managing nonviolent offenders.

The heavy investments in incapacitation, through incarceration and supervision, have led to large numbers of returning offenders. As a result, Nebraska's prison system is currently operating at 153 percent of capacity. The increase in Nebraska's prison population and corrections costs necessitates a new approach to managing those who violate the criminal laws of our state. At the same time, a growing body of criminal justice research continues to provide insights into the types of interventions with offenders that are associated with reductions in recidivism and increases in public safety.

Reentry is a structured process that spans incarceration and community release. LB999 changes the approach to Nebraska's criminal justice system from a focus on incapacitation to a focus on offender transition and reentry. The overarching goal of reentry is to enhance public safety by supporting successful offender transition to the community.

Key provisions of the bill include:

- Enhanced accountability for the Office of Probation, Department of Correctional Services, and Office of Parole Administration, through enhanced reporting requirements, and the creation of a deidentified data archive for criminal justice research.
- Funding for violence reduction and anger management programming, job training, and housing.
- Creation of the Reentry Programming Board, elimination of the Community Corrections Division of the Crime Commission. The Reentry Programming Board will:
 - Coordinate with Department of Correctional Services, the Office of Parole Administration, the Office of Probation Administration, and nongovernmental providers and organizations to track inmate, probationer, and parolee participation in programming;
 - Develop a plan for transitioning from a community corrections model to a reentry model;
 - Inform criminal justice system stakeholders and the general public about the availability, use, and benefits of reentry-programs.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Brad Ashford