

Co-Chair Letter of Transmittal

December 30, 2022

Governor Jay Inslee

Lt. Governor Denny Heck

President of the Senate

Senator John Braun

Senate Minority Leader

Representative Laurie Jinkins

Speaker of the House

Representative J.T. Wilcox

House Minority Leader

Senator Christine Rolfes

Chair, Senate Ways and Means Committee

Senator Lynda Wilson

Ranking Member, Senate Ways and

Means Committee

Senator Manka Dhingra

Chair, Senate Law & Justice Committee

Senator Mike Padden

Ranking Member, Senate Law & Justice Committee

Senator Claire Wilson

Chair, Senate Human Services, Reentry, and
Rehabilitation Committee

Senator Chris Gildon

Ranking Member, Senate Human Services, Reentry,
and Rehabilitation Committee

Representative Timm Ormsby

Chair, House Appropriations Committee

Representative Drew Stokesbary, Ranking Member,

House Appropriations Committee

Representative Roger Goodman

Chair, House Public Safety Committee

Representative Gina Mosbrucker

Ranking Member, House Public Safety Committee

Representative Drew Hanson

Chair, House Civil Rights & Judiciary Committee

Representative Jim Walsh, Ranking Member, House

Civil Rights & Judiciary Committee

Dear Governor Inslee, Senators, and Representatives

We are pleased to submit this Final Report and Recommendations of the Washington State Criminal Sentencing Task Force. It has been our honor and privilege to serve as Task Force Co-Chairs, working alongside a highly dedicated and diverse group of people who have devoted countless hours of time and talent to improving Washington's sentencing system. This work over the last three and a half years represents a rigorous, comprehensive, inclusive effort to modernize Washington state's sentencing system, centered on the policy goals of public safety, improving effectiveness, and reducing complexities and implementation errors. The Task Force and its workgroups held hundreds of meetings, each characterized by active engagement, thoughtful consideration of information and perspectives, and respectful dialog.

This report contains 13 consensus recommendations—and more than a dozen other recommendations with support from multiple diverse constituencies—to improve the effectiveness of the criminal

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sentencing system, to reduce complexities and errors, and to promote and improve public safety. Most of these recommendations suggest legislative statutory changes to address the policy goals. On those recommendations on which the group did not reach consensus, this report contains an explanation of the issues, overview of Task Force discussion, and summary of the differing perspectives to provide information that might help in addressing these issues going forward. The Task Force wanted the Legislature and Governor to have a record of the evidence, issues, and options it considered.

Central among the consensus recommendations is the proposal for intermediate sanctions and reintegrative services, which, along with the top-line recommendation to fund programming and services (based on the findings of an intake assessment) for all incarcerated individuals, hold promise to increase public safety, decrease collateral consequences, and improve the effectiveness of the system, and strengthen communities around the state.

The Task Force reached consensus on 47 recommendations to the Governor and Legislature in 2020. While a handful of these have been implemented (notably, the new Mental Health Sentencing Alternative and several targeting the Department of Corrections), the majority sit unattended, awaiting legislative action, after the state Supreme Court decision in *State v. Blake* decision subsumed the attention of lawmakers during the 2020 Legislative Session. We ask that you revisit these recommendations to gauge which merit action in 2023.

The work herein represents the findings and best thinking of more than three years of the most collaborative, comprehensive, evidence-based consideration of criminal sentencing issues ever done in our state. The recommendations, if implemented, would ensure our sentencing system is evidence-based, aligns with current best practices, and advances public safety by both holding individuals accountable and providing them with the support and services needed for successful reentry.

On behalf of the Task Force, we also must convey the urgent need for investments into the sentencing system. Many up-front expenditures on recommendations in this Report promise significant future savings. We strongly urge the policy and law makers of Washington to make the investments required for the recommendations in this Report to get enacted.

Sincerely,

Co-Chair, Representative Roger Goodman
Washington State House of Representatives
Chair, House Public Safety Committee

Co-Chair, Jon Tunheim
Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys

Co-Chair, Waldo Waldron-Ramsey
Washington Community Action Network