



Jeff Zmuda, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

Testimony on HB2474

Submitted To

The House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee

By

Kansas Department of Corrections

February 4, 2020

The Kansas Department of Corrections appreciates the opportunity to offer a perspective on the proposed changes in HB2474. We are neutral on the bill as proposed.

HB2474 proposes to authorize a process for the court to provide a waiver of registration fees under the Kansas Offender Registration Act and to modify the penalty for obstructing apprehension or prosecution of a person who is required to register under this Act. The Kansas Sentencing Commission indicates this would reduce prison admissions by 75 in FY2021 and 82 by FY2030. It would also save 75 prison beds in FY2021 and 129 by FY2030.

Consideration of this policy change is important because the current public policy in Kansas as it relates to crime and punishment confronts our citizens with a prison system, and more comprehensively a criminal justice system, which is stressed and over capacity.

Kansas' community corrections probation programs are working with the same financial resources as in fiscal year (FY) 2013. Our prisons house more persons than we have capacity, requiring the use of contract beds at county jails and out of state. Within our prisons we lack the resources to provide the programs and treatment needed to change inmate behavior, returning them to the community without the skills, education, and training needed to improve the safety of the public upon their release. Once an inmate releases they are met by parole staff who serve 21% more offenders than in FY15, with the same level of resources. With these systemic challenges, it should not surprise anyone that the five-year average from FY2015-2019 shows that 64.5% of admissions to KDOC facilities are condition violators (persons unsuccessful on supervision in the community).

In closing. We appreciate that the Committee, and the Legislature as a whole, are discussing the public policies of Kansas as they relate to the criminal justice system. We will strive to be a resource to you as you continue your policy work.

Thank you