



House of Representatives State of Idaho

March 5, 2021

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee Chairs

Dear Senator Harris and Representative Rubel:

We write to propose an Office of Performance Evaluations study of ways Idaho can reduce costs in our criminal justice system, promote successful post-incarceration transitions, and undertake primary prevention of incarceration, all while protecting public safety.

For the past few decades, Idaho's prison spending has increased at an alarming rate. Until very recently our prison expenditure growth has outpaced most other states. This expenditure growth threatens other funding priorities for the state. Our current incarceration trends will also likely necessitate significant capital investment to increase prison capacity. In 2018 the cost was projected to be \$500 million.

It has been several years since Idaho passed the Justice Reinvestment Act with the goal of addressing these troubling trends. However, there remains work to do, especially at the front end and back end of the criminal justice system. This is an ideal moment to take stock of our current system and identify what future steps we should take as a state.

We propose that the specific study questions include:

- What measures or programming is Idaho currently undertaking during community supervision and beyond to improve the success of post-incarceration transitions? Are there measures we currently undertake that are less effective than alternatives? Are there new approaches or adjustments to our current programming that Idaho should consider?
- What front-end programs could Idaho begin to undertake to prevent initial incarceration, including more widely available problem-solving courts, diversionary programs, and other approaches?
- What evidenced-based primary prevention interventions should Idaho consider pre-arrest, pre-adjudication and at the misdemeanor level for adults and for youth?
- What is the return on investment for the measures explored in the questions above and how are they likely to impact recidivism and public safety?

This report would allow the Legislature to:

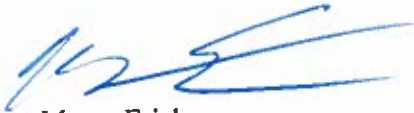
- evaluate the effectiveness of current approaches to post-incarceration transitions,
- assess the appropriateness of current levels of funding of community supervision and other reentry programs, and
- consider additional front-end and post-incarceration programming to address rising prison costs with knowledge about the likely costs and benefits.

We appreciate your consideration of this study topic.

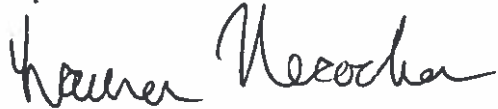
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Cannon".

David Cannon
Representative, District 31

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marco Erickson".

Marco Erickson
Representative, District 33

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauren Necochea".

Lauren Necochea
Representative, District 19