



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 19, 2014

14:021

CONTACT: Jon Hanian

(208) 334-2100

GOVERNOR OTTER SIGNS JUSTICE REINVESTMENT BILL

Public safety package will reduce recidivism and contain the cost of corrections

(BOISE) – Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter today signed into law a bill aimed at improving public safety, reducing recidivism and slowing growth in Idaho's inmate population. Implementing Senate Bill 1357 also could help the State avert up to \$288 million in new prison spending over the next five years.

The legislation was unanimously approved by both the Idaho House and Senate. It also received widespread support from criminal justice system stakeholders. It is the product of 10 months of work on the "justice reinvestment" project that Governor Otter launched with Chief Justice Roger Burdick, Senate President Pro Tem Brent Hill and House Speaker Scott Bedke.

SB1357 represents a consensus-based, data-driven approach to responsibly reducing corrections costs and reinvesting savings in strategies to increase public safety. The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center serves as a technical assistance provider to Idaho, in partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts and the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).

"We all realized that unless we made some important changes, the prison population would continue to grow significantly. That would mean spending much more without actually addressing the causes," Governor Otter said. "I applaud everyone who worked tirelessly to produce the legislation that I was pleased to sign today. For the people of Idaho, it will mean safer communities and better use of taxpayer dollars."

In January, the CSG Justice Center released [a report](#) identifying three challenges confronting Idaho's criminal justice system: (1) revolving doors in our prisons, with people getting out only to reoffend and return, (2) inefficient use of prison space focused on people convicted of property and drug offenses, and (3) insufficient oversight to ensure that State-funded recidivism-reduction strategies are yielding the intended outcomes.

"Addressing such significant criminal justice system challenges required tremendous bipartisan, inter-branch collaboration, which resulted in the Idaho solution that was signed into law today," Senate Judiciary and Rules Committee Chairman Patti Anne Lodge said. "This legislation will continue Idaho's history as a low-crime state while reducing recidivism and the resulting costs from growth in our prison system."

SB1357 includes provisions for strengthening probation and parole supervision practices and programs to reduce recidivism; structuring parole to make more productive use of prison space; tailoring sanctions for violations of supervision; and assessing, tracking, and ensuring the success of recidivism-reduction strategies.

Senator Lodge and House Judiciary, Rules and Administration Chairman Rich Wills co-chaired both an [interim legislative committee](#) and a working group that received regular presentations from criminal justice experts at the CSG Justice Center.

“The process enabled all sides to agree on the major drivers of growth in Idaho’s correction system,” Representative Wills said. “After we found consensus on the sources of the problem, the question turned to the best way to increase safety and lower spending. The answer we came up with is the policy framework codified in this bill.”

Of the five-year projected savings, \$33 million is recommended for reinvestment back into probation and parole officer training, more officers to supervise probationers and parolees, community-based substance use treatment, and improvements to the victim restitution collection process. Funding for these priorities will be kick-started in the State budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1.

“The authors of this bill should be applauded for including meaningful input from Idaho’s prosecutors, law enforcement and judiciary,” Twin Falls County Prosecutor Grant Loeb said. “Increasing public safety requires significant investments in stronger supervision, greater offender accountability, and better management of victim restitution.”

“The Courts are very pleased that the Idaho Judiciary was involved in the Justice Reinvestment efforts from the beginning,” Chief Justice Roger Burdick said. “We pledge to remain active in the implementation of this important legislation and to ensure that robust probation supervision – including community-based treatment and testing – are employed to improve public safety, rehabilitate offenders, and preserve sentencing discretion to judges of the individuals who come before them.”

“Idaho joins 18 other states in pursuing this data-driven justice reinvestment approach,” said Denise O’Donnell, director of BJA. “By signing SB1357 into law, Idaho is one step closer to achieving its goals of containing corrections costs while increasing public safety. We look forward to seeing the same collaboration that served Idaho so well during the initial phase of justice reinvestment as stakeholders now work to implement these policy changes.”

“Policymakers in Idaho are showing what can happen when you make decisions based on data and research,” said Adam Gelb, director of The Pew Charitable Trusts’ public safety performance project. “They have crafted a set of policies that will cut crime, hold offenders accountable, and halt the rising costs of corrections.”

For more info about SB1357, visit <http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2014/S1357.htm>

The [Council of State Governments Justice Center](#) is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. The Justice Center provides practical, nonpartisan advice and evidence-based, consensus-driven strategies to increase public safety and strengthen communities.

###