

One Hundred Fourth Legislature - First Session - 2015

Introducer's Statement of Intent

LB605

Chairperson: Senator Les Seiler

Committee: Judiciary

Date of Hearing: February 20, 2015

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

LB 605 ("The Justice Reinvestment Act") institutes a data-driven justice reinvestment policy framework that is the product of extensive work by a bipartisan, inter-branch working group established under LB 907, enacted in 2014. LB 605 is designed to slow Nebraska's prison population growth, ease prison overcrowding, contain corrections spending, and reinvest a portion of savings in strategies that can reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

The policies in this bill address three major challenges facing the state's criminal justice system: (1) overcrowded prisons house a large number of people convicted of nonviolent, low-level offenses; (2) the felony sentencing system fails to ensure that people sentenced to prison receive post-release supervision or pay victim restitution; and (3) the parole supervision system lacks the resources necessary to handle a growing parole population, has not fully adopted evidence-based practices, and is not positioned to respond effectively to parole violations.

The legislation employs three strategies to address these challenges: (1) use probation for people convicted of low-level offenses; (2) ensure post-release supervision, and address victims' needs; and (3) improve parole supervision to reduce recidivism among individuals released from prison.

If fully implemented, the policy framework is estimated to: avoid hundreds of millions of dollars in correction spending, avert prison population growth and ease overcrowding, lower recidivism, reduce the number of people released from prison without supervision, and increase victim restitution collections.

Principal Introducer: _____

Senator Heath Mello