

Initial Incarceration, Reentry Analysis, and Comparison of Relevant States Interim Committee 2025 Final Report



Study Assignment

The scope of study was to:

- Examine the makeup (demographic analysis, offense characteristics, and geographic distribution) of the current prison population;
- Conduct a comparison of incarceration rates in similar states, including a review of sentencing laws and the incarceration of non-violent offenders; and
- Identify barriers to successful reentry after incarceration, including housing, job training, and substance abuse barriers.

Summary of Meetings

The committee held its first meeting [June 24, 2025](#), in Rapid City. There, it discussed the scope of the committee before reviewing a [presentation](#) covering background information on incarceration rates and prison populations in South Dakota compared to those in bordering states, specifically Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota. The presentation covered prison populations by age, gender, ethnicity/race, and offense. After reviewing the information and posing ideas for topics to address in future meetings, the committee took public testimony.

The second meeting was held [July 16, 2025](#), in Sioux Falls. The committee heard from several stakeholders in the Rapid City and Sioux Falls areas and a selection of national organizations. The National Conference of State Legislatures gave a [presentation](#) providing more comparative research from across the country. The Pennington County State's Attorney and Public Defender shared their perspectives on the criminal justice system, along with potential policy solutions. Representative Brian Mulder introduced the co-founder of Think 3D Solutions to speak about programming the organization does at the South Dakota State Penitentiary. Representatives from Alvarez and Marsal Public Sector Services then gave a [presentation](#) on opportunities to enhance community reentry, particularly via Medicaid funding. The committee also took public testimony.

The final meeting was held [October 29, 2025](#), in Sioux Falls. The committee first heard from representatives of the Prison Seminars Foundation. It then heard from the Council of State Governments Justice Center, which gave a [presentation](#) about work it has done to date with other states, and ideas for how its work could help shape future criminal justice policy in the state. The committee also took public testimony.

Committee Action

The committee adopted the following recommendations:

- Reemphasize the delivery of GED and technical education within correctional facilities;
- Reestablish the inmate community service program to match minimum-custody inmates with local non-profits, cities, counties, and school districts to provide low-cost assistance and build work ethic in soon-to-be-released inmates;
- Restore substance abuse counseling, mental health counseling, and outside services for counseling and faith-based opportunities; and
- Allow non-profits to contract with the state of South Dakota to provide comprehensive, residential, evidence-based programming that focuses on healing the whole person: spirit, soul, and body.

The committee also determined the following to be important considerations:

- Reestablish community partnerships with Glory House and other community-based transitional programs;
- Reestablish a work release program to help inmates find and retain jobs;
- Provide additional resources to Mike Durfee industrial training and education programs;
- Enhance penalties for individuals supplying drugs to inmates;

- Build on public-private relationships offering additional education and industrial training;
- Add resources to reduce the parole agent to parolee ratio from 56:1 to 45:1 (or less) and review the probation officer to probationer ratio;
- Add resources to create a post-release case worker program;
- Restore discipline procedures to pre-Covid policies to reestablish a culture of mutual respect;
- Increase the scope and authority of the Corrections Commission and add legislative membership;
- Establish a public-private partnership program to reduce recidivism through state-supported skills training and privately supported mental and spiritual rehabilitation, consistent with constitutional requirements for neutrality between religion and non-religion;
- Establish workforce development programs (ranching, agriculture, forestry services, etc.) in central, western, and northern South Dakota to work in tandem with state-supported holistic therapeutic programming; and
- Provide for felony expungement upon completion of programs, a certain number of hours worked, proof of sobriety, etc.

Listing of Committee Members

Representative Greg Jamison, Co-Chair; and Senator Kevin Jensen, Co-Chair. Representatives Jeff Bathke, Mary Fitzgerald, Tony Randolph, Tim Reisch, and Kady Wittman. Senators Tamara Grove, Chris Karr, Carl Perry, and Jamie Smith.

Listing of Staff Members

Melanie Dumdei, Assistant Chief for Legal; Joey Knofczynski, Senior Fiscal Analyst; and Kaitlyn Baucom, Administrative Specialist.