

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §31-20-26

§31-20-26. Legislative oversight committee.

The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates shall each designate five members of their respective houses, at least one of whom shall be a member of the minority party, to serve on a Legislative Oversight committee charged with immediate and ongoing oversight of the authority and the commissions, and functions and duties of the authority and the commissions created by this article. This committee shall report regularly at each legislative session on the implementation of the purposes set forth in section one-a of this article. It shall regularly investigate all matters relating to integrity, probity and foresight in funding, operating and planning the correctional system on state, regional and county levels, and may include the planning, funding, constructing and operating of juvenile detention and correctional facilities. Specifically, the committee shall study and make recommendations to the Legislature as to the revision of the system of classifying adult inmates, with a view variously to decreasing the prison population confined in "maximum security" facilities and to designating and meeting the needs of inmates classified as elderly, disabled or otherwise handicapped. In addition, the committee may study and make recommendations to the Legislature relating to the system of juvenile detention and juvenile corrections.

The committee shall further study and inform the state judiciary of the impact of sentencing on the composition of the prison population in proportion to the use of facilities. It shall recommend alternatives to long-term sentencing, and shall recommend measures to improve the quality of correctional staff and facilitate nonconfrontational contacts with inmates. The committee shall investigate means to structure inmates' time to ensure genuine and willing reaccommodations to societal norms; shall probe and coordinate all available means for funding state, regional and county correctional facilities; and shall contract with penal experts to study these issues in appropriate depth and perspective. Annually, to predict a prudent use of available funds, the committee shall study the profile of the inmate population with regard to its age and social background and needs.

The committee shall recommend to the Legislature the funding required to execute these functions. It shall meet regularly with the governing body of the authority established in this article to determine what may be required for full and timely compliance with all federal mandates and court-ordered changes in the correctional system and shall recommend funding for these changes.