

Re: In support of HB 5004

Date: March 13, 2025

Dear Ways and Means Joint Committee on Public Safety,

As a resident of Washington County and a member of our local Public Safety Coordinating Council (PSCC), I am requesting that you support and fully fund HB 5004.

Community Corrections is an integral part of our Public Safety and Justice ecosystem, providing people serving sentences with a structured and orderly living situation to help them transition back into the community. They offer a secure, structured living environment, while focusing on accountability, employment, treatment, and skill building. The Community Corrections' goals include crime prevention, which requires practitioners to be highly trained and skilled at building unique case plans and understanding how to produce true internal change with people on supervision so they can live the rest of their lives thriving in the community as well as maintaining crime-free, pro-social lifestyles. These people-centered approaches with evidence-based programs maximize transitions, reduce recidivism, and keep the community safe.

It is critical that HB 5004 fully fund the 2024 cost study at the rate of \$18.18 per unit, so our county can apply all the requisite resources to support this successful model. Past underfunding has resulted in underutilization of our bed facility and reduced programs. The practitioner development and retention of the workforce model requires stable and supportive funding.

Community supervision is a cost-effective solution, clearly worth fully funding as the alternative is prison, an order of magnitude more expensive (~\$184 per day) with much higher recidivism rates.

Community Corrections provides real solutions, real safety and real cost savings – they need your full support.

Thank you,
Melissa Laird
Washington County