

JUVENILE JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE WORK GROUP

June 5, 2014 Meeting Summary

Work Group Formation

In 2013, South Dakota adopted the Public Safety Improvement Act (PSIA), a comprehensive, bipartisan legislative package to improve public safety by strengthening our adult sentencing and corrections systems. The state built that reform on a foundation of South Dakota data and national research. With implementation of the PSIA solidly underway, state leaders are now launching a study of the juvenile justice system. Governor Dennis Daugaard, Chief Justice David Gilbertson, President Pro Tem of the Senate Corey Brown and Speaker of the House Brian Gosch requested technical assistance from The Pew Charitable Trusts along with its partner, the Crime and Justice Institute.

The Governor and Chief Justice invited a bipartisan, inter-branch group of 17 individuals representing state and local government to participate on the Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Initiative Work Group. The group is charged with examining the state's juvenile justice system and developing policy options that will:

- Increase public safety by improving outcomes for youth and families and reducing juvenile recidivism;
- Effectively hold juvenile offenders more accountable; and
- Reduce juvenile justice costs by investing in proven community based practices and preserving residential facilities for serious offenders.

Building on Success

Governor Daugaard's opening remarks at the first Work Group meeting (on June 5, 2014) reaffirmed the mandate of the group and

established his intent to act upon its recommendations.

Work Group members shared their preliminary thoughts on the juvenile justice system's strengths and moved into a discussion about the population of committed youth across the country and in South Dakota. The Work Group saw that, nationally, juvenile commitment rates have been declining over the past decade. South Dakota's rates have also declined, but at a significantly slower pace than most states. National data from 2011 shows South Dakota has the second highest commitment rate in the country, with 386 committed youth per 100,000. The Work Group also discussed more recent Department of Corrections' data showing that as of April 30, 2014, the Department had 620 committed youth in its care, including 330 in out-of-home placements and 290 in community aftercare.

States Prioritizing Juvenile Justice Reform

South Dakota joins a growing number of states undertaking reforms to their juvenile justice system, including Georgia, Kentucky and Hawaii. The Work Group heard about the challenges facing those three states as well as their tailored policy responses aimed at improving public safety and juvenile justice outcomes while containing taxpayer costs.

Work Group Next Steps

The next step for the Work Group is an in-depth review of the state's juvenile justice data and system to identify drivers of the committed juvenile population. In addition, a series of stakeholder meetings will be held over the summer to inform the Work Group as it moves forward.