

NEBRASKA SENTENCING REFORM TASK FORCE

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

1:00 P.M. CDT

NEBRASKA STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 1113

1. **Call to Order, Introduction and Roll Call**

Attorney General Mike Hilgers called the meeting of the Nebraska Sentencing Reform Task Force (Task Force) to order at 1:07 p.m. and requested a roll call. Members Present: Senator Carolyn Bosn, Douglas County Sheriff Aaron Hanson, Attorney General Mike Hilgers, Lt. Governor Joe Kelly, Douglas County Attorney Don Kleine, Colfax County Attorney Bruce Prenda, and Kearney Police Chief Bryan Waugh. Members Absent: Lincoln County Public Defender Robert Lindemeier, Senator Terrell McKinney (late arrival), Douglas County Public Defender Tom Riley, and Senator Justin Wayne (late arrival).

2. **Announcement of the Open Meetings Act**

Attorney General Hilgers announced that the meeting was being conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

3. **Notice of Meeting**

On September 23, 2024, a notice of this meeting with the agenda was provided to the Task Force members and the public by posting to the Nebraska Public Meeting Calendar ([Nebraska.gov/calendar](https://nebraska.gov/calendar)). Notice of the meeting with the agenda was also available for public inspection at the Attorney General's Office, State Capitol Room 2115, and was kept continually current.

4. **Adoption of Agenda**

A motion to adopt the meeting agenda was made by Lt. Governor Kelly and seconded by Senator Bosn. Members voting in favor of the motion: Bosn, Hanson, Hilgers, Kelly, Kleine, Prenda, and Waugh. Members voting in opposition to the motion: none. Members absent: Lindemeier, McKinney, Riley, and Wayne.

5. **Approval of September 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from the September 13, 2024, meeting was made by Senator Bosn and seconded by Sheriff Hanson. Members voting in favor of the motion: Bosn, Hanson, Hilgers, Kelly, Kleine, Prenda, Waugh, and Wayne. Members voting in opposition to the motion: none. Members absent: Lindemeier, McKinney, and Riley.

6. Presentation from Rob Jeffreys, Director of the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services.

Director Jeffreys discussed his vision for the Nebraska Department of Corrections (NDCS). The department's core strategic plan centers around people, programming, physical structure, and policy; Director Jeffreys went into depth on each. There was a discussion on how employment pre- and post-incarceration affects inmates. This led to discussion on specific programs that are available to incarcerated individuals and the outcomes of those programs. A question was asked regarding how the restructuring of parole administration under NDCS has been going. Director Jeffreys discussed how the last couple of months have gone and the different assessments they are conducting to see what can be improved; a report is scheduled to be released in November. Data collection is a focus of Director Jeffreys; NDCS has recently obtained Recidiviz to assist in this effort. This led to a discussion on the Re-entry Continuity Advisory Board, and when they are meeting; however, the board members have not been set. There was significant discussion on programming, including access to core programming and the differences between clinical and cognitive programming. This included the availability of tablets for incarcerated individuals and how those are being used in relation to programming. Prison management and a shift in institutional attitude were also discussed. Staffing shortages and facilities, including designated bed distribution, were briefly addressed; interest in data on that subject was expressed. This led to a discussion on caseworkers and re-entry coordinators and what their responsibilities were. The impact of one year or fewer sentences was mentioned, along with some statistics regarding it. Data around mental health and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detainees was discussed, and there was an interest in getting more data. Director Jeffreys produced multiple documents for the task force, including data on the NDCS parole-eligible incarcerated population, 2022 mandatory discharges, 2021 mandatory discharges, and 2020 mandatory discharges.

7. Subcommittee Updates

The Data Collection subcommittee updated that they have plenty of data and staff will share it in the coming week. The Criminal Justice System Resource Allocation and Recidivism Reduction subcommittee had no updates. The Sentencing Reform Subcommittee had no updates. The Public Safety subcommittee had no updates.

8. Discussions of objectives for next meeting.

The objective of the next meeting, scheduled for October 7 via Zoom, with some members attending in person at the Nebraska State Penitentiary in the public visitation room, is to hear from invited testimony. Another meeting will be held on October 24 at the State Capitol. The Task Force's final report is due in November; a draft outline was provided to the Task Force.

9. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

10. Adjournment

The Task Force, having concluded its business as provided on the adopted agenda, adjourned on a motion by Senator Bosn, seconded by Senator McKinney. A roll call vote was requested. Members voting in favor of the motion: Bosn, Hanson, Hilgers, Kelly, Kleine, McKinney, Prenda, Waugh, and Wayne. Members voting in opposition to the motion: none. Members absent: Lindemeier and Riley. The meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.