Reduce Crime, Save Money

Evidence-Based Programs:
—Washington State’s Approach—

Maine Rising, The Juvenile Justice Task Force
Augusta, Maine
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Washington Legislature Asked WSIPP: 
“Are There Evidence-Based Policy Options That Reduce Crime at Less Cost?”

Our 3-Step Research Approach

1. What works, and what doesn’t, to reduce crime? What is politically and practically relevant to WA?
   We locate rigorous (comparison group), real world evaluations of adult and juvenile corrections programs, & prevention. (600+ studies to date)

2. What are the economics of each option?
   We estimate the taxpayer and crime victim benefits and costs (ROI) to people in Washington

3. Statewide, how would alternative “portfolios” affect prison populations, public spending, & crime?
Our “Consumer Reports” Lists:

What Works?
What Doesn’t?
What Can Give Taxpayers a Good Return on Their Money?

To see all of our reports, go to our website:
www.wsipp.wa.gov
## What Works to Reduce Crime? (Draft 2009 Results)

### Adult Offenders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Change in Crime (# of EB Studies)</th>
<th>Benefits Minus Costs, per-person, life cycle (Probability: you lose $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Drug Courts</td>
<td>-9.3% (67)</td>
<td>$3,717 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Prgs., Prison</td>
<td>-8.3% (17)</td>
<td>$9,449 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Tx in Prison (TC or out-patient)</td>
<td>-5.4% (20)</td>
<td>$6,371 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cog-Behavioral Treatment</td>
<td>-7.1% (27)</td>
<td>$8,811 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP: surveillance</td>
<td>-1.6% (23)</td>
<td>-$2,596 (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP: treatment</td>
<td>-17.9% (11)</td>
<td>$8,531 (22%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Juvenile Offenders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Change in Crime (# of EB Studies)</th>
<th>Benefits Minus Costs, per-person, life cycle (Probability: you lose $)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Family Thpy.</td>
<td>-18.1% (7)</td>
<td>$23,671 (&lt;1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multisystemic Therapy</td>
<td>-7.7% (10)</td>
<td>$6,533 (n/a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression Repl. Trng.</td>
<td>-5.3% (4)</td>
<td>$6,714 (n/a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Int. Transitions</td>
<td>-15.3% (1)</td>
<td>$37,101 (n/a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDT Foster Care</td>
<td>-17.9% (3)</td>
<td>$38,904 (n/a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prevention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Change in Crime (# of EB Studies)</th>
<th>Crime Benefits Shown*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-School* (low income)</td>
<td>-16.6% (8)</td>
<td>$5,707* (n/a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Family Partnership*</td>
<td>-15.7% (2)</td>
<td>$5,225* (n/a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Programs have other monetized non-crime benefits; only crime-related benefits reported here.
Making the Information Useful for Legislative Action

Two concepts:

✓ The role of the non-partisan, local, general purpose, seasoned, advisor

✓ A focus on costs and benefits

Major Washington Legislative Actions

✓ Started funding several evidence-based juvenile justice programs in late 1990s and early 2000s.

✓ 2007 Legislature began substantial funding of a portfolio of evidence-based criminal justice programs in adult and juvenile corrections, and prevention.
Three Evidence-Based Implementation Issues
(Completed or Being Completed/Refined)
in Washington State

✓ Formal Assessment Process (Tools)
  to align participants with the right programs,
  and to focus resources on higher risk populations

✓ State-Funded Quality/Fidelity System
  to assure better adherence to the funded:
  — assessment system, and
  — the intervention program models

✓ Funding Formulas with the Right Incentives
  to encourage interest, adherence, and innovations in EB
  programs. Other issues: block grants vs. categoricals;
  a state EB list coupled with local choice from the list
Keeping Track of the Investments & Tying Them to State Budgets

Key Development → WA now ties, explicitly each year, the official state prison forecast to the expected effects of the funded portfolio.

- State and local agencies must submit annual data on program participants
- Comparison-group outcome evaluations of individual programs underway
In 1980, taxpayers spent $575 per household on the criminal justice system in WA.

Today they spend $1,250 per year.

A 117% increase.

In 2008, crime rates were 42% lower than they were in 1980.
Things We’ve Learned; Where We Are Heading

✓ It is possible to produce “investment advice” for a legislature to help inform some spending decisions, and bring together two analytical worlds:
  ▪ The “best of science” (well-tested evidence, often slow).
  ▪ The “best of business” (real-time decisions with uncertainty)

✓ Cost-benefit information appeals to R’s and D’s.

✓ The value of a consistent cost-benefit/portfolio approach.

✓ The analytics are, maybe, half the challenge. The public policy advice business is a “people” business.

✓ WA is now starting to tie the decisions to budget drivers, and to expand into new public policy areas.
### Need to Cut Your Corrections Budget to Save Money?  
**Finding the Right Policy/Budget Mix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative Policy/Budget Choice</th>
<th>Fiscal Impact</th>
<th>Crime Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Reduce prison average daily population</td>
<td>Save money (probably)</td>
<td>Increase crime (probably)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Invest in certain “evidence based” programs</td>
<td>Spend money (probably)</td>
<td>Decrease crime (probably)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Do the right combination of A. and B.</td>
<td>Save money, <strong>NET</strong> ?</td>
<td>Crime neutral, <strong>NET</strong> ?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are studying these “probably”s to see if there are win-win solutions.
ANNUAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUE

EXCLUSIVE

RATINGS

Over 200 Crime–Related Programs and Policies

Programs that reduce crime and save taxpayer money.

Institute Publications: www.wsipp.wa.gov

Reports Are Available on:

✓ Criminal Justice
✓ Juvenile Justice
✓ Child Welfare
✓ Education
✓ Mental Health
✓ Substance Abuse
✓ Prevention

Evidence-Based Public Policy Options To Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates

Current long-term forecasts indicate that Washington will need two new prisons by 2020 and possibly another prison by 2030. Since a typical new prison costs about $250 million to build and $45 million a year to operate, the Washington State Legislature expressed an interest in identifying alternative “evidence-based” options that can: a) reduce the future need for prison beds, b) save money for state and local taxpayers, and c) contribute to lower crime rates.

The 2005 Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to report, by October 2006, whether evidence-based and cost-beneficial policy options exist.

If economically sound options are available, then the Legislature also directed the Institute to project the total impact of alternative implementation scenarios.

This report describes our results to date. We begin by providing background information on historic and projected incarceration rates in Washington, as well as a history of crime rates and fiscal costs of the criminal justice system. We then describe the process we use to determine if evidence-based and economically sound options exist and we present our findings. This is followed by our projections of the impact of alternative implementation scenarios. We conclude by discussing some implications of the findings and next steps. For technical readers, appendices begin on page 18 and describe our research methods and results in greater detail.

Summary

Under current long-term forecasts, Washington State faces the need to construct several new prisons in the next two decades. Since new prisons are costly, the 2005 Washington State Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to project whether there are “evidence-based” options that can:

a) reduce the future need for prison beds,
b) save money for state and local taxpayers,
c) contribute to lower crime rates.

We conducted a systematic review of all research evidence we could locate to identify what works, if anything, to reduce crime. We found and analyzed 529 rigorous comparison-group evaluations of adult corrections, juvenile corrections, and prevention programs, most of which were conducted in the United States. We then estimated the costs and benefits of many of these evidence-based options.

Finally, we projected the degree to which alternative “portfolios” of these programs could affect future prison construction needs, criminal justice costs, and crime rates in Washington.

We find that some evidence-based programs can reduce crime, but others cannot. Per dollar of spending, several of the successful programs produce favorable returns on investment. Public policies incorporating these options can yield positive outcomes for Washington.

We project the long-run effects of three example portfolios of evidence-based options: a “current level” option as well as “moderate” and “aggressive” implementation portfolios.

We find that if Washington successfully implements a moderate-to-aggressive portfolio of evidence-based options, a significant level of future prison construction can be avoided, taxpayers can save money, and crime rates can be reduced.
Thank You!

Mount Rainier
Thank You!