

# Report of the J. Russell (Russ) Jennings Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight to the 2026 Kansas Legislature

**CHAIRPERSON:** Representative Bob Lewis

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON:** Senator Kellie Warren

**RANKING MINORITY MEMBER:** Representative Jo Ella Hoyer

**OTHER MEMBERS:** Senators Elaine Bowers, Ethan Corson, Oletha Faust Goudeau, Beverly Gossage, Stephen Owens, and Kenny Titus; and Representatives John Carmichael, Leo Delperdang, John Resman, Tobias Schlingensiepen, and Adam Turk

**CHARGE**

***Monitor Inmate and Juvenile Offender Populations and Study Kansas Department of Corrections Operations***

KSA 2025 Supp. 46-2801 directs the J. Russell (Russ) Jennings Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight (Committee) to monitor inmate and juvenile offender populations and to review and study the programs, activities, plans, and operations of the Kansas Department of Corrections; monitor the implementation of juvenile justice reform and the work of the Kansas Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee; and review and study adult correctional and juvenile offender programs of local governmental entities.

The Committee is additionally charged with studying the following topics:

- The “Second Look Act;”

- A reduction of court fines and fees;
- Holding crossover youth accountable and providing both crossover youth and Child in Need of Care youth with safe and appropriately structured housing;
- Juveniles' access to and utilization of firearms;
- How the Kansas Offender Registration Act is being applied to juveniles; and
- Judicial discretion regarding mid-level juvenile offenders.

December 2025

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# J. Russell (Russ) Jennings Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight

## ANNUAL REPORT

### Conclusions and Recommendations

- The Committee supports the Kansas Legal Services in its efforts to conduct expungement clinics and driver's license clinics, and it conveys that support to the House Committee on General Government Budget.

*Proposed Legislation:* None.

### BACKGROUND

The 1997 Legislature created the Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight to provide legislative oversight of the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) and the Juvenile Justice Authority. Pursuant to Executive Reorganization Order No. 42, on July 1, 2013, the jurisdiction, powers, functions, and duties of the Juvenile Justice Authority and the Commissioner of Juvenile Justice were transferred to KDOC and the Secretary of Corrections.

Statewide, there are eight adult correctional facilities: El Dorado Correctional Facility, Ellsworth Correctional Facility, Hutchinson Correctional Facility, Lansing Correctional Facility, Larned State Correctional Facility, Norton Correctional Facility, Topeka Correctional Facility, and Winfield Correctional Facility. KDOC also operates parole offices throughout the state and is responsible for the administration of funding and oversight of local community corrections programs.

There is one operational juvenile correctional facility: the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex. Individuals between 10 and 17 years old may be adjudicated as juvenile offenders and remain in custody in a juvenile correctional facility until age 22.5 and in the community until age 23.

The Committee's duties, as outlined in KSA 2025 Supp. 46-2801, are to monitor the inmate population and review and study KDOC's programs, activities, and plans regarding its statutorily prescribed duties, including the implementation of expansion projects, the operation of correctional food service and other programs for inmates, community corrections, parole, and the condition and operation of the correctional institutions and other facilities under KDOC's control and supervision. The Committee is also charged to review and study the adult correctional programs, activities, and facilities of counties, cities, and other local governmental entities, including the programs and activities of private entities operating community correctional programs and facilities, and the condition and operation of jails and other local governmental facilities for the incarceration of adult offenders.

With regard to juvenile offenders, the Committee is directed to monitor the implementation of juvenile justice reform and the work of the Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee (JJOC). Further, the Committee is charged to review and study the juvenile offender programs and activities and facilities of counties, cities, school districts, and other local governmental entities; programs and activities of private entities operating community juvenile programs and facilities; and the condition and operation of local governmental, residential, or custodial facilities for the care, treatment, or training of juvenile offenders.

In addition to its statutory duties, the 2025 Legislative Coordinating Council (LCC) charged the Committee with studying:

- The “Second Look Act;”;
- A reduction of court fines and fees;
- Holding crossover youth accountable and providing both crossover youth and Child in Need of Care youth with safe and appropriately structured housing;
- Juveniles’ access to and utilization of firearms;
- How the Kansas Offender Registration Act is being applied to juveniles; and
- Judicial discretion regarding mid-level juvenile offenders.

The Committee requested and received approval from the LCC for three meeting days in 2025.

## COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The Committee met on November 6 and 7, 2025.

### November 6, 2025, Meeting

#### *Presentation on Community Corrections*

The President of the Kansas Community Corrections Association (KCCA) presented to the Committee. The President provided an overview of the Kansas Community Corrections program, explained that keeping individuals in the community instead of incarcerating them is a cost-avoidance measure for the state, and shared the KCCA’s funding requests for FY 2027.

In response to questions from the Committee, the President stated the reason the most recent statewide success data the KCCA has is from FY 2021 is that was the year the data system was updated to a new system; success is defined as an individual on supervision not going to prison while on supervision; regarding a new grant

funding formula, it would be most helpful if any significant changes were known in advance for planning purposes; a new grant funding formula is going to be reviewed by a third party outside of the KDOC; and, in regards to juveniles committing offenses while in possession of a firearm, the KCCA wants the people with the most information about the case making the decisions regarding the juvenile’s sentence.

#### *Presentation on the Kansas Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee*

The Chairperson of the JJOC presented an overview of the JJOC, the JJOC’s 2025 key achievements, the status of the response to the 2020 Legislative Post Audit report “Juvenile Justice Reforms: Evaluating the Effects of [2016] Senate Bill 367,” and a variety of metrics the JJOC uses to determine the success of juvenile programming.

The Chairperson also presented information on the Evidenced-Based Program Account (EBPA). He explained from where the EBPA funds come, the allocation process for the EBPA grants, the JJOC’s role in recommending grant applications to the KDOC, and the EBPA projections, which predict a negative balance in the coming years.

Finally, the Chairperson presented information on the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM), which launched in Kansas in 2020. He presented an overview of the model and explained it has been implemented in three counties so far and three more counties have been identified for implementation in 2026.

In response to questions from Committee members, the Chairperson stated the preference of the JJOC would be for the funds in the EBPA to not go to any other sources; the CYPM model was determined to be best as a pilot model instead of launching it statewide; and the definition of the EBPA is very limiting on how the funds may be expended.

#### *Presentation on the Kansas Sentencing Commission*

The Executive Director of the Kansas Sentencing Commission (KSSC) presented information on the KSSC annual report and prison

population projections, and an update on the [2003] SB 123 substance use treatment program.

In response to questions from Committee members, the Executive Director stated that substance use treatment programs are provided at no cost to most offenders; the Commission is undergoing a comprehensive review of the sentencing grid and considering how much weight to put on an offender's criminal history; and increasing penalties is not a deterrent for crimes, in relation to prison bed space impact.

### ***Informational Hearing on "Second Look Act"***

The Committee received an informational briefing on the Second Look Act (Act), the provisions of which are currently found in 2025 SB 255.

### ***Bill Summary***

An Assistant Revisor of Statutes provided a summary of the provisions contained in 2025 SB 255, stating the bill would allow certain offenders to petition a court to conduct a resentencing hearing. In response to questions from Committee members, the Assistant Revisor explained that any resentencing is up to the discretion of the judge hearing the application for resentencing.

### ***Prison Bed Impact***

The Executive Director of the KSSC presented an updated prison bed impact statement for 2025 SB 255. He described the assumptions made when developing the impact statement.

### ***Stakeholder Input***

The Committee heard from several stakeholders regarding the provisions of the Act, including representatives from Equity Initiative, Inc.; Kansas Second Look Act Coalition; Kansas Prison Organizing Project; Families for Justice Reform; and American Civil Liberties Union, Kansas. The stakeholders generally stated that people grow and change while incarcerated, and deserve a chance to state their case for early release in front of a court. The Committee also received written-only testimony.

### ***Presentation on Assistance for Reentry Services and Expungement***

The Executive Director for Kansas Legal Services presented information on the expungement clinics Kansas Legal Services has hosted across the state, including statistics relating to the impact these clinics have had, the stories of some individuals, and the budget request for FY 2027.

### **November 7, 2025, Meeting**

### ***Presentation on KDOC***

#### ***Annual Update***

The Secretary of Corrections presented an annual update on the KDOC. In the annual update, the Secretary covered a vast array of topics, including budget allocations, staffing population projections, parole, community corrections funding, education and employment of individuals in custody, Kansas correctional industries, introduction of contraband, innovations and investments, requests for proposals, the five-year capital improvement plan, sex offender program management and placement, the Sexual Predator Commitment Act, and replacement of the Hutchinson Correctional Facility.

In response to questions, the Secretary explained further:

- In FY 2026, there was a \$102 million change in health care expenditures to cover the gap necessary in health care costs, as the vendor underbid the contract, and the Secretary anticipates health care costs to continue to rise;
- The EBPA balance looks artificially high because funds are annually returned by grantees;
- KDOC partners with law enforcement as much as possible to prevent contraband from entering facilities, and the biggest problem is the cell phones that make it into facilities. The Federal Communications Commission is considering allowing mobile networks to jam cell phones in prisons;

- In the future, the KDOC may partner in drone detection of contraband, but the current technology is expensive. Presently, it costs \$1 million for drone detection even without interception capabilities;
- When considering where to construct new or expanded facilities, staffing must be kept in mind. More beds at a facility makes no difference if the expanded facility cannot be staffed. After the Hutchinson Correctional Facility, the Winfield Correctional Facility would be the next best facility for expanded staffing.

*Annual Update on Juvenile and Community-based Services*

The KDOC Deputy Secretary of Juvenile and Adult Community-based Services presented an annual update on the Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex, juvenile community-based services, and adult community-based services.

***Informational Hearing on 2025 HB 2329***

The Committee held an informational briefing on 2025 HB 2329.

*Bill Brief*

A Senior Assistant Revisor of Statutes presented a summary of the bill, stating the bill would increase detention length and criminal penalties for juveniles who used a firearm in

commission of an offense and would increase placements of juveniles in youth residential facilities.

*Stakeholder Input*

The Committee heard from several stakeholders regarding 2025 HB 2329, including representatives of the Southeast Kansas Regional Juvenile Detention Center; EmberHope; Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, Kansas Peace Officers Association, and Kansas Sheriffs Association; and the Riley County Police Department. The Committee also received written-only testimony from a representative of Compass Behavioral Health. The stakeholders shared their perspectives on the bill, generally speaking positively to the provisions the bill contains.

**COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

At the conclusion of the November 7, 2025, meeting, the Committee held discussion over the content of the two days of meetings. Following the discussion, the Committee made the following recommendation:

- The Committee supports Kansas Legal Services in its efforts to conduct expungement clinics and driver’s license clinics, and conveys that support to the House Committee on General Government Budget.