

EXECUTIVE ORDER 83-11

Establishment of the Governor's Emergency Commission on Prison Overcrowding

The state of Washington is experiencing a crisis in its prison system. The population in the Reception Unit at the Washington Correctional Center is at 238 percent of rated capacity; the main section of the Washington State Penitentiary is at 159 percent of rated capacity; and the Washington State Reformatory is at 131 percent of rated capacity.

The population at these institutions consists primarily of offenders who have committed acts of violence. These individuals become increasingly dangerous and unmanageable as the prison population grows larger.

In order to reduce prison population without endangering public safety, the Executive and the Legislature worked together to enact the Prison Overcrowding Act of 1982. While this program has helped to stabilize the prison population at an overall rated capacity of 131 percent, it is experiencing diminishing returns as the eligible offender pool is reduced.

We have called upon county and city governments to help the state by taking offenders into their jails. However, available space at the local level is severely limited.

In order to consider a broader range of options to relieve the prison overcrowding situation and to increase public awareness and understanding of the problem, it is desirable that an emergency commission be established to study the issue and make recommendations. The Commission shall consist of citizens, state and local officials, and criminal justice professionals.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John Spellman, Governor of the state of Washington, by virtue of the authority vested in me, do hereby order and direct the following:

- A. An advisory commission shall be established to be known as the Governor's Emergency Commission on Prison Overcrowding.
- B. The Commission shall be appointed by the Governor and consist of: a police chief, a sheriff, a representative from the court system, a representative of the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, a prosecutor, the Secretary of the Department of Corrections, the Attorney General, the Chairman of the Board of Prison Terms and Paroles, the Director of the Office of Financial Management, the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services, a member of the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, a representative from county government, a representative from city government, a member of the Washington Council on Crime and Delinquency, four members of the legislature, one from each caucus, and nine citizen members.
- C. The Governor shall appoint the chairperson of the Commission.
- D. The Commission shall examine the causes and conditions of the prison overcrowding situation and consider methods for relief.

E. The Commission shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations to the public, to the Governor, and to the legislature by December 19, 1983.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the State of Washington to be affixed at Olympia this 17th day of August A.D., Nineteen hundred and eighty-three.

John Spellman
Governor of Washington

BY THE GOVERNOR:

Secretary of State
