

BILLS TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS IN THE SENTENCING GRID

The following bills received extensive review by the Sentencing Commission, a highly respected group of criminal justice professionals from every part of the system. Many ideas were reviewed and rejected by the Commission, but these were retained as options made a great deal of sense. They reflect careful consideration of the sentencing grid and public safety concerns.

HB 805 – Adjust B1 – E felony penalties - This bill adds an additional 3 months of post-release supervision to B1 through E felonies. Appropriate and thorough re-entry policies are especially important for offenders in the higher sentencing categories. We do not want them to simply come back into the communities after a long period of incarceration without the necessary support and supervision.

The additional three months of community supervision (a small percentage of most of these sentences) are taken from the minimum sentence and added to the maximum. If an individual has infractions in the prison environment, they will not be released at the minimum period.

HB 806 – Sentence Lengths - All sentences fall on a sentencing grid that progresses in length of time served based on 6 different prior record levels. This bill simply makes a more equal percentage increase between prior record levels. **THIS BILL DOES NOT CHANGE THE BASE SENTENCE FOR THE CRIME FOR AN OFFENDER WITH NO PRIORS.**

When Sentencing Commission members reviewed this change, many felt that the grid should have been developed with an equivalent percentage increase from the beginning. This change will result in increases of some sentences and decreases of others.

HB 807 – Restructure Prior Criminal Record Points – This bill is similar to 806 in that it evens out the prior record point ranges so that an increase of the same number of prior record points moves an offender into the next prior record level. **LIKE HB 806, THIS BILL DOES NOT CHANGE THE BASE SENTENCE FOR THE CRIME FOR AN OFFENDER WITH NO PRIORS.**

It also allows an offender with one point to be sentenced at Level I. This is a minor change since very few offenders have only one point.

These three bills, if enacted will simply mean that prison construction will move ahead, but at a slightly slower pace than might be necessary otherwise. They are fiscally responsible bills that have been carefully reviewed by the Sentencing Commission.