

Potential Fight In Corrections Funding

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The DOC projects its population will rise in large part because of a change in the code reform that requires many offenders to serve 75 percent of their sentence, rather than half under the previous system.

One of the primary goals of the criminal code reform effort that took effect in July was to drive more low-level offenders away from the state prison system and into local community corrections programs.

In recognition of that shift, House Republicans this session drafted a bill giving those local programs 50 million dollars a year in grants.

But the governor's proposed budget included more money for the Department of Correction, including funds for additional room at two prisons, and no dollars for community corrections.

DOC Legislative Affairs Director Tim Brown says the agency's trends don't show a decrease in its population just because there's greater need in community corrections.

"Those individuals that, you know, historically come to DOC, they're going to continue to come to DOC at a higher rate based upon current law," Brown says.

Brown notes that a change in the code reform requires many offenders to serve 75 percent of their sentence, rather than half under the previous system.