



# Legislative Post Audit Performance Audit Report Highlights

## Adult Correctional Agencies: Determining Whether Functions Could Be Combined To Gain Cost Efficiencies

### Report Highlights

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#### Audit Concern

*Legislators wanted to know whether significant cost savings could be achieved by merging the functions of the Sentencing Commission and the Parole Board into the Department of Corrections.*

#### Other Relevant Facts

*It's uncommon for states to put their parole function within a correctional agency. A 2008 International Parole Association Survey reported that only 6 of 47 responding states had their parole function within their correctional agencies.*

*It's very common to have correction's staff do prison population projections and legislative impact research. Our interviews with agency staff from all 50 states found that 39 states, or 78%, perform such functions through a correctional agency.*

**Estimated Potential  
Cost Savings as a  
Result of This Audit:**

**Sentencing Commission staff  
function merged with the  
Department of Corrections:  
\$152,000 per year  
(\$760,000 over five years)**

**AUDIT QUESTION:** *Could the Department of Corrections, Sentencing Commission, and Parole Board be operated as a single agency to achieve operating efficiencies and reduce costs?*

#### AUDIT ANSWER and KEY FINDINGS:

- Merging the 3-member Parole Board—which is primarily responsible for granting and denying parole—into the Department of Corrections would not achieve any additional operating efficiencies because the Board's staff functions already are carried out by Department staff, and Board members already are co-located with the Department.
- Merging the Sentencing Commission's staff functions—prison population projections and legislative impact research—into the Department would allow the State to save about \$152,000 a year by eliminating duplicate administrative functions—including agency management, payroll, IT support, and the like—and the staff positions and other costs associated with them.

#### Estimated Cost Savings that Could Be Achieved Through Merging Sentencing Commission Staff Functions Into the Department of Corrections

Actions That Could Produce Savings	Total
Eliminate Executive Director position, create a half-time legal position, eliminate a half-time office assistant and a half-time accounting position.	\$117,200
Rent Reduction: move remaining Sentencing Commission staff into the Dept. of Corrections space.	\$23,300
Absorption of IT support, and elimination of unneeded equipment and other costs.	\$11,400
<b>Total Estimated Cost Savings</b>	<b>\$151,900</b>

- ▶ The merger savings we identified represent about 20% of the Commission's fiscal year 2009 operational expenditures.
- ▶ The 17-member Commission could remain an independent advisory body to the Department of Corrections or Legislature.
- ▶ Any potential conflicts of interest that arise from merging Sentencing Commission functions into the Department can be overcome.
- If the agencies remain separate, but the Department takes over administrative staff and functions for the Commission (similar to the way it supports Parole Board members), the State could save about \$48,000 a year.

## We Recommended

- The report recommends that the Legislature merge the Sentencing Commission into the Department of Corrections to achieve the efficiencies and cost savings we identified.
- The report also contains recommendations for the Commission and the Department to improve the operational efficiency of those agencies and to reduce operating costs.

**Agency Response:** *The Parole Board generally concurred with the report's findings, conclusions, and recommendations. In its response, the Department of Corrections disagreed with our recommendation that the Sentencing Commission be merged into the Department, but indicated it was prepared to implement any recommendations the Legislature adopts. In its response, the Sentencing Commission strongly disagreed with the report's recommendation that it be merged into the Department of Corrections.*

## Other Relevant Facts

*Kansas is one of only six states that has a Sentencing Commission, and not a correctional agency, perform these functions.*

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### DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR IMPROVED GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY OR COST SAVINGS?

If you have an idea to share with us, send it to [ideas@lpa.ks.gov](mailto:ideas@lpa.ks.gov), or write to us at the address shown. We will pass along the best ones to the Legislative Post Audit Committee.