



**PROBATION OFFICERS
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
INDIANA, INC.**

P.O. Box 44148, Indianapolis, IN 46244

February 6, 2014

RE: SB 171 Community Supervision

The Probation Officers Professional Association of Indiana (POP.A.I.) has a history of actively supporting coordination and consolidation of local correctional resources to improve efficiency and effectiveness of community supervision.

In fact, POP.A.I. worked with Rep. Ralph Foley and the Criminal Code Evaluation Commission (CCEC) on draft language for consolidation or unification of community corrections programs and probation departments. This draft language was included in the initial/filed version of HEA 1006 (of 2013). This consolidation/unification language survived the House but was removed in the Senate.

POP.A.I. supported HEA 1006-13 primarily due to the various new provisions to enhance and improve probation and community supervision. Unfortunately, many of the probation related provisions contained in HB 1006 were removed from the bill as it moved through the legislative process. One of the provisions in HEA 1006-13 that POP.A.I. supported and welcomed included the ***Probation Improvement Fund*** which would have provided grants administered by the Indiana Judicial Center. Had this initiative been funded by the legislature, these grants could have been used to:

- a. Promote probation departments' adoption of evidence based correctional practices to focus supervision resources on high risk offenders;
- b. Develop and use a progressive sanctions policy to more effectively respond to probation violations;
- c. Reduce the risk level of felony probationers through effective supervision and by addressing any needs the persons have for substance abuse treatment, mental health services, or other services.
- d. **Assist counties with consolidation of resources to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of probation and community corrections programs.**

Probation and community corrections programs in Indiana have a history of collaborating and sharing resources, both informally and formally. When SB 171 was filed in January 2014, POP.A.I. members were puzzled at the use of the term "pilot" because there are several Indiana counties that operate community corrections programs that could be described as "consolidated" or "unified" that is, the community corrections programs operate with the statutorily prescribed Community Corrections Advisory Boards and also operate as units or divisions of probation departments, or as county departments that are separate from probation departments but included in the administrative structure of the probation department as in Grant County.

Community Corrections Programs that are “consolidated” or “unified” with probation departments include:

1. Bartholomew – The Chief Probation Officer (PO) is the Community Corrections Director.
2. Boone - The Chief PO is the Community Corrections Director.
3. Morgan - The Chief PO is the Community Corrections Director.
4. Owen - The Chief PO is the Community Corrections Director.
5. Fulton - The Chief PO is the Community Corrections Director.
6. Noble – Community Corrections Director is Assistant Chief PO.
7. Monroe - Community Corrections Director is Assistant Chief PO.
8. Marion County Juvenile - Community Corrections Director is Assistant Chief PO.
9. Grant – Grant County is unified with separate but equal probation and community corrections departments under the Correctional Services Director.
10. Jasper - Community Corrections Director is a probation officer and reports to Chief PO.
11. Lawrence – Community Corrections Director is a probation officer who reports to the Chief PO.

Some of the counties listed above have successfully operated these consolidated or unified probation/community corrections departments for 30 years. The Indiana Department of Correction conducted program audits of all community corrections programs in the state in 2013. Some of the consolidated/unified departments listed above were among the highest scoring departments on this statewide audit. Clearly these longstanding successful departments are doing something right.

The Indiana Legislature can play a significant role in increasing collaboration and cooperation between probation and community corrections programs in this state. Financial incentives could motivate additional counties to emulate the successes of the community corrections programs that collaborate to a high degree with probation. Perhaps a summer study committee could help other jurisdictions to learn the evidence-based practices employed by these successful programs.

POPAI urges the legislature to support and provide funding to **SB 171 Community Supervision**. Coordination of community corrections and probation services will benefit the clients we serve and will ultimately improve public safety. This bill is an important first step. However, there continues to be much work ahead. Presently there are no financial resources allocated toward this initiative. For this effort to be successful at the local level there must be financial incentives as well as technical assistance provided to counties by the DOC and the Indiana Judicial Center.

POPAI continues to support the concept of local determination regarding the decision whether or not a probation and community corrections program should “unify” or “consolidate.” For the future, whether it be this legislative session, a summer study committee, or a future legislative session, it is POPAI’s position that the Indiana Legislature must address statutory conflicts that currently exist that could be barriers to counties in their efforts to streamline local correctional services and, if deemed appropriate at the local level to consolidate or unify probation and community corrections services.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Linda Brady,
President,
Probation Officers Professional Association of Indiana (POPAI)