



**Snohomish County**  
**County Executive's Office**

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## Snohomish County Executive seeks to empower judges and ease jail overcrowding

*Ordinance seeks greater use to electronic monitoring and work crews*

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon today introduced a measure aimed at giving judges greater latitude in confining prisoners, which could reduce pressure on the County's overcrowded jail.

The ordinance would allow Snohomish County Superior Court judges to use such innovative methods of confinement as electronic home monitoring, work crews, day reporting and work education release for lower level offenders within the criminal justice system.

Superior Court judges worked collaboratively with the Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office and the County's Department of Corrections to develop the plan.

"This ordinance combines punishment and rehabilitation in a single sentencing option," said Judge Thomas Wynne, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. "Our hope is that the additional flexibility available to sentencing judges will result in lower recidivism and quicker resolution of criminal cases."

Said Reardon, "Our goal is to give judges alternative ways of confining prisoners so there will be secure beds for the hardest offenders. Our jail is overcrowded. By giving judges the authority to sentence some offenders to detention with, say, an electronic home monitoring device, we can better manage the jail population."

Reardon praised the excellent relationship among the criminal justice agencies in

Snohomish County, adding that he believes this process will lead to closer working relationships with the human service and community based agencies which provide the programming.

While many of these efforts are already offered throughout Snohomish County, the ordinance makes the necessary changes to the existing county ordinance to expand the number of alternative to confinement options. It also gives judges the authority to determine who is eligible for the placement program and under what sentencing and sanctioning conditions.

Reardon said that some non-violent offenders may not need to be in secure confinement and would be better served by alternatives. He noted that Judge Wynne, Chief Criminal Deputy Prosecutor Mark Roe and Corrections Director Steve Thompson believe that some prisoners can benefit from community-based punishment including work crews or offender change programs.

The County Executive said the confinement alternatives will not replace the need for secure detention facilities, but, if successful, will reduce reliance upon secure detention.

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