



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

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Press Release

District Attorney Michael Dougherty serves as the Co-Chair for Colorado’s Sentencing Reform Task Force for the Colorado Criminal and Juvenile Justice Commission. As a result of their work, the Colorado Legislature is currently considering SB 21-271, “Concerning the Adoption of the 2021 Recommendations of the Colorado Criminal and Juvenile Justice Commission Regarding Sentencing Offenses.” The bill passed through the Senate with unanimous, bipartisan support. This progress is the direct result of a collaborative effort by stakeholders throughout the criminal justice system. The bill is set for a hearing in the House on Thursday, June 3rd.

There has not been a comprehensive review of sentencing laws in Colorado since 1985. Over the ensuing decades, many new crimes have been created and other changes have been made to various sentencing laws which have resulted in Colorado’s sentencing statutes becoming outdated, misaligned, and inconsistent in their application. Also, there is a lack of certainty that exists regarding the amount of time a person will actually serve when sentenced. This uncertainty is unfair to victims, the accused, and the community.

Governor Polis directed that the Sentencing Reform Task Force undertake a comprehensive review of sentencing laws to ensure that our sentencing structure is rational, just, equitable, consistent, and reflective of our shared values. The Sentencing Reform Task Force reviewed over 1,000 criminal offenses covering Title 1 through Title 44 and conducted a state-by-state review of sentencing ranges. The result of that work is SB 271. The bill is over 360 pages in length. Although there is much work to be done by the Task Force, SB 271 represents an important first step in sentencing reform in Colorado.