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Governor



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TO: Harold Clarke, Secretary
Washington Department of Corrections

FROM: Chris Gregoire, Governor

SUBJECT: Conditional Release of Offenders in Custody for Violations of the Terms of
Their Community Supervision

Public safety is a priority of my administration. I am outraged by the recent release of offenders in King County back into the community prior to the completion of their custody sanction. Offenders must be held accountable for their actions. There must be timely consequences for offenders who violate the terms of their release. When it is determined that return to custody is the appropriate sanction, the offender must serve the full term of custody. Anything less sends the wrong message to the violator and threatens public safety.

As you know, I have asked you to evaluate the recent deaths of law enforcement officers in King County who were killed by offenders under supervision of the Department of Corrections, individually as well as together, to determine what lessons can be learned to improve the state oversight of individuals under community supervision. I granted you additional time to complete the report so you could involve an evaluator from the National Institute of Corrections to provide an additional and more thorough review of our state's policies and procedures. However, action must be taken now before the results of the evaluation can be known.

I am hereby directing that any offender in the state serving custody time as a sanction for violation of the terms of his or her release shall serve the full sanction. The Department shall take all necessary steps to ensure all violators serve the full custody sanction. I also expect that the Department will continue to use the same criteria in determining which violators need to be returned to custody.

I will not accept bed space as a reason for conditional release. The Department will find space. This is a matter of public safety and additional funding will be made available to carry out the terms of this directive, if necessary. I expect that the Department will take immediate action to implement this directive and early release of violators will not occur again.