

STRENGTHENING OPPORTUNITIES AND REHABILITATION FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS (SOAR)

Recent bipartisan laws requires former juvenile offenders be successfully rehabilitated and reintegrated into society. "SOAR" will help attorneys and judges collaborate for better outcomes for youth and their communities.

SB 6529



"The community is best served when those in the criminal justice system work together to ensure that a youth who commits an offense does not re-offend in the future."

-Todd Dowell

Supervising Deputy
Prosecutor, Kitsap Co.
Juvenile Prosecution Unit

Why "SOAR" is Important:

In 2014, the legislature said: "The primary goal of the Washington state juvenile justice system is the rehabilitation and reintegration of former juvenile offenders." RCW 13.50.010. Yet the Juvenile Justice Act does not specifically state rehabilitation as its purpose. Former juvenile offenders are less likely to re-offend and are more likely to support their own communities when they have can be employed. Right now youth:

- ❑ **Can be prevented from** participating in a deferred disposition, even when they qualify for diversion under the law
- ❑ **Must be taken to jail** by police who respond to a domestic violence incident, even when the victim is the youth's parents and they object
- ❑ **Cannot get jobs** that involve driving because they lost their drivers license after a first time alcohol or drug offense—even when the offense does not involve a vehicle

What "SOAR" Does:

- ❑ Makes "**rehabilitation**" an expressed intent of the Juvenile Justice Act
- ❑ Ensures **deferred dispositions** are available for qualifying youth
- ❑ Gives **judges discretion** to impose penalties on certain first offenses
- ❑ Creates a **greater role for parents** in domestic violence incidents when they are victims and increases prosecutorial discretion in these cases
- ❑ Eliminates **unnecessary notifications** to the Department Of Licensing and **loss of drivers' license** for offenses that do not involve vehicles