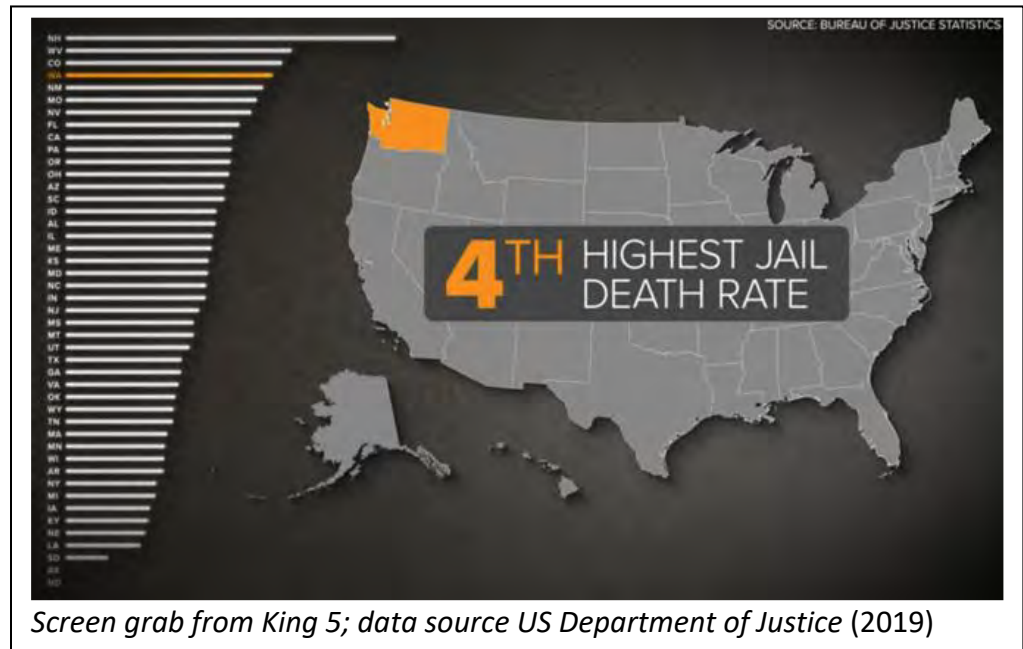


Washington has no system to make jails accountable or transparent. This failure has helped create [a crisis of jail deaths](#): **Washington has the fourth highest rate of jail deaths in the United States.** SB 5005 and HB 1424 will make jails more transparent and accountable by requiring monitoring and reporting on jail conditions, notifying jail administrators of individuals in unsafe conditions, supporting jail employees, and promoting improvements in our jail system.

Monitoring jails is common sense and basic public safety policy. Across the country, more than half of all states monitor jails to ensure they are meeting basic safety standards and serving their purpose. Washington

used to have a system to oversee jails, which the US Department of Justice considered a national model, until it was cut for fiscal reasons in 1987. All other Washington institutions that house people in total confinement – prisons, hospitals, juvenile detention facilities – are subject to independent monitoring. Jails are the deadly exception.



SB 5005/HB 1424 is a proven, cost-effective model for accountability. Modelled after recommendations of the Washington Joint Legislative Task Force on Jail Standards, national practices, and the WA Office of Corrections Ombuds, SB 5005/HB 1424 will not impose mandates, standards, or costs on jails – it will monitor jails for compliance with their own policies and ensure that those policies meet current legal requirements. This is a proven and cost-effective means of ensuring that jails keep staff and the community safe. SB 5005/HB 1424 is supported by, among others, [The Seattle Times](#) and labor unions.

SB 5005/HB 1424 is fiscally smart. This year, [Garfield County paid \\$2.5 million](#) to the family of a young man whose corpse was provided two meals and left for 18 hours. [Yakima County has been sued for \\$50 million](#) after officials told family their loved one had died of accidental causes, only for the family to later learn that he had been pepper sprayed, hog-tied, beaten, subjected to prone restraint, and killed. With roughly 30 jail deaths per year, the state pays millions of dollars to bereaved families annually. The costs of monitoring are small compared to the costs in human lives and judgments paid.