

Idaho Criminal Justice Commission
Regular Meeting
May 29, 2026

Location: Hybrid – Idaho Supreme Court Building – [Zoom Link](#)

Time: 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Idaho Criminal Justice Commission Members Present:

Ashley Dowell, Chair, IDJC	Erik Lehtinen, SAPD
Tracy Basterrechea, Chiefs of Police Association	Thomas Sullivan, Judge, Magistrate Court*
Kieran Donahue, Vice Chair, ISA	Jeff Nye, Idaho Attorney General’s Office
Monty Prow, Health & Welfare	Darren Simpson, Judge, District Court*
Melissa Wintrow, Senate Judiciary & Rules	Bruce Skaug, House Jud & Rules Admin
Bill Gardiner, Idaho State Police	Denton Darrington, Public Member
Jonathon Brody, Judge, District Court*	

Eric Fredericksen, State Public Defender
Bree Derrick, Department of Correction
Bernadette LaSarte, Public Member
Greg Wilson, Department of Education

Comprising a quorum of Idaho Criminal Justice Commission (Commission)

*Non-voting members

Idaho Criminal Justice Commission Members Absent:

Joe Alfieri, House Jud, Rules & Admin	Carson Tester, Office of the Governor
Russ Wheatley Sr., Public Member	Ross Edmunds, Office of Drug Policy
Todd Lakey, Senate Judiciary & Rules Chairman	Grant Loebbs, Prosecuting Attorneys Assoc.
Bart Davis, U.S. Attorney, District of Idaho*	Seth Grigg, Idaho Association of Counties
Christine Starr, Comm of Pardons & Parole	
Sara Omundson, Idaho Supreme Court*	

Others Present:

Sandy Jones, AOC
Jen Rupe
Justin Whatcott for Bart Davis
Kelli Brassfield for Seth Grigg
Jessica Dexter, ?
Jim Cook for Sara Omundson
Jessica Dexter, for Ross Edmunds

Agenda <i>Who's Responsible</i>		Meeting Outcomes/Decisions Reached	Due Date
9:00 am	Call to Order– <i>Chair Ashley Dowell</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Roll Call— <i>Chair Ashley Dowell</i> • Review Commission’s Vision and Mission Statement and Values— <i>Commission Members</i> 	9:05 am	
Commission Management			
	Action Item – Approve April 3, 2026, Minutes	<i>Canyon County Sheriff Kieran Donahue made a motion to approve the minutes from April 3, 2026, Idaho State Police Colonel Bill Gardiner seconded. Motion carried.</i>	
Promote Well-Informed Policy Decisions			
	1. Sex Crimes - Tracy Basterrechea, ICOPA and Erik Lehtinen, SAPD	<p>The subcommittee is taking an incremental approach to the complex issue of sex crime prevention, currently focusing on information gathering to establish a shared baseline of knowledge regarding individual and systemic (micro and macro) levels of the problem.</p> <p>It was highlighted that there is no single solution for sex crimes, as each scenario requires different strategies. The subcommittee identified varied dynamics, including crimes involving family or trusted friends against younger children, runaway scenarios exploited by older adults, and abuse by teachers or coaches. The discussion differentiated between primary prevention, which intervenes before a crime occurs, and secondary prevention, which focuses on early intervention after a potential issue is noted.</p> <p>The subcommittee is currently deliberating on whether to focus on developing specific prevention programs or to adopt a broader, 30,000-foot view to address standards and funding holistically. This</p>	

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		<p>discussion was prompted by observations of potentially redundant efforts in the current prevention landscape.</p> <p>Roger Sherman presented data from a 2023 study covering the years 1990 to 2024, which showed a significant reduction in reported sexual and physical abuse. Sherman attributed these findings to shifting social norms and an increased willingness to discuss these topics, which were previously kept silent.</p> <p>The subcommittee highlighted the "Stewards of Children" curriculum from the organization Darkness to Light. The program focuses on five steps to minimize opportunity for abuse, emphasizing that adults act as role models for safe behaviors. It was noted the necessity of overcoming societal tendencies to prioritize protecting reputations over addressing boundary-crossing behaviors by adults.</p> <p>It was emphasized that protecting children is an adult responsibility, citing a detective's assertion that society cannot "investigate our way out" of this issue. The subcommittee is currently developing a facility-based checklist project to assist organizations in evaluating their screening, selection, and general environments to prevent abuse.</p> <p>The group has identified key barriers to scaling these programs, including a lack of consistent, top-down leadership, funding limitations, and the discomfort associated with discussing these topics. Additionally, it was noted that men, in particular, may feel defensive or nervous about these discussions, perceiving them as accusations, which complicates engagement efforts.</p> <p>Discussion arose regarding the strong correlation between domestic violence and child sexual abuse, a topic described as a "taboo" that requires more open dialogue. The group agreed that addressing this connection is essential for effective prevention strategies in schools and other community settings.</p>	

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		<p>Engaging parents directly remains the most difficult challenge. Members expressed frustration with the cyclical nature of government, where short-term political turnover often prevents long-term commitment to cultural and training initiatives. It was suggested that the commission could use its influence to advocate at the governor's and legislative levels for the discipline and consistent funding required to sustain these long-term prevention efforts.</p> <p>There was further discussion around other challenges and funding.</p>	
	<p>2. Support for Victims - Bernie LaSarte</p>	<p>The subcommittee consults with five Idaho tribes to identify necessary services and improvements for those impacted by MMIWP. The subcommittee meets monthly to address gaps in victim assistance and services for these populations.</p> <p>MMIWP was identified as a public safety issue that disproportionately affects indigenous persons who go missing or are murdered at higher rates than non-indigenous populations. The region serves as a high-risk thoroughfare for trafficking between Washington and Montana. Referencing HCR 33 of 2020 and a 2021 Boise State report, it was noted that while indigenous people represent 3.56% of Idaho's population, they accounted for 4.06% of missing person cases, with significantly higher rates of homicide by assault in these communities.</p> <p>To address these issues, the subcommittee recommends standardizing MMIWP case responses, data collection, and agency collaboration across jurisdictions. Key improvements include addressing some of the coroner practices, such as the misclassification of indigenous deaths, and enhancing the capacity of missing persons clearinghouses. The need for state funding to support long-term indigenous-led victim service infrastructure was highlighted, noting that while recent federal Department of Justice (DOJ) and Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) funding has helped, consistent state-level support should be required.</p>	

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	<p>It was proposed to replace the current Endangered Missing Persons Alert (EMPA) system in Idaho with a dedicated Missing Indigenous Persons Alert (MIPA) system to better align with neighboring tribal protocols and simplify responses. This change would likely require a state legislative mandate, similar to previous alert system implementations.</p> <p>There were remarks on the complexity of law enforcement on sovereign tribal lands, which complicates investigations into domestic violence, sexual assault, and MMIWP cases. There was support expressed for partnering with tribal authorities and legislative efforts to better address these challenges.</p>	
	<p>Subcommittee Updates:</p> <p>3. Human Trafficking Presentation - Jen Rupe, Deputy Attorney General; Major Jens Pattis, ISP</p> <p>4. Riders Presentation - Bree Derrick, IDOC; Judge Simpson</p>	

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	<p>5. Public Safety Positions - Chief Deputy Doug Hart, CCSO and Wendi Secrist, Workforce Development Council</p> <p>6. Coroner System - Kelli D. Brassfield, IAC; Senator Melissa Wintrow</p> <p>7. Neurocognitive Holds and Placements - Judge Sullivan, ISC and Jared Larsen, DHW</p> <p>8. Support for Victims - Christine Starr, COPP and Bernie LaSarte</p>	<p>5. The subcommittee toured the West Ada School District's career technical high school program and examined the Department of Labor's SkillBridge program, which assists service members in transitioning to civilian careers. They are prioritizing an action plan for programs that increase the public safety workforce, such as developing localized career pathways within school districts to guide students toward law enforcement or public safety careers.</p> <p>6. Highlighted was a critical need for an autopsy facility and forensic pathologists in East Idaho to address capacity issues and long delays in death certificate issuance (00:40:58). The group discussed potential collaboration on facility solutions, with a suggestion to utilize a renovated district office in Idaho Falls, and emphasized that this issue impacts public health, safety, and criminal justice responses.</p> <p>7. The committee has been reviewing the quarterly data on neurocognitive holds, noting that individuals often stay in facilities longer than data suggests. Challenges include the limited scope of current data—such as the inability to track repeat holds—and the need to potentially amend statutes to improve effectiveness.</p> <p>8. No update this meeting.</p>	
	Other Commission Business		
12:00 pm	Adjourn	The meeting adjourned at 11:33 am MT.	

Regularly scheduled meeting to be held in Boise, Friday, July 17, 2026

“Collaborating for a Safer Idaho”