American Correctional Association

PUBLIC CORRECTIONAL POLICY ON THE USE OF APPROPRIATE SANCTIONS AND CONTROLS

1984-7

Introduction:

In developing, selecting and administering sanctions and punishments, decision-makers must balance concern for individual dignity, public safety, and maintenance of social order. Correctional programs and facilities are a costly and limited resource; the most restrictive are generally the most expensive. Therefore, it is good public policy to use these resources wisely and economically.

Policy Statement:

The sanctions and controls imposed by courts and administered by corrections should be the least restrictive, consistent with public and individual safety and the maintenance of social order. Selection of the least restrictive sanctions and punishments in specific cases inherently require balancing several important objectives — individual dignity, fiscal responsibility, effective correctional operations, the interest of the victim, and severity of the crime. To meet these objectives, correctional agencies should:

A. Advocate to all branches of government and to the public at large, the development and appropriate use of a wide range of sanctions, punishments, programs and facilities;
B. Recommend the use of the least restrictive appropriate dispositions in judicial decisions;
C. Classify persons under correctional jurisdiction to the least restrictive appropriate programs/facilities; and
D. Employ only the level of regulation and control necessary for the safe and efficient operation of programs, services and facilities.

This Public Correctional Policy was unanimously ratified by the American Correctional Association Delegate Assembly at the Winter Conference in Denver, Jan. 12, 1984. It was last reviewed and reaffirmed at the 2019 Winter Conference in New Orleans, LA on January 15, 2019.