

**Department of Planning and Budget**  
**2026 General Assembly Session**  
**State Fiscal Impact Statement**

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**ORIGINAL**

**Bill Number:** HB1280

**Patron:** Cole, J.G.

**Bill Title:** State correctional facilities; participation of prisoners in employment and educational programs; reentry planning.

**Bill Summary:** Expands the program assignments in which the Director of the Department of Corrections may place a prisoner while such prisoner is confined in a state correctional facility. The bill requires the Director to place a prisoner in an appropriate program assignment within (i) 90 days of the arrival of a prisoner sentenced to a new term of confinement to a state correctional facility or (ii) 60 days of a prisoner already in custody being transferred to a new state correctional facility and provides that participation in such program assignments shall be for an average of 30 hours per week, calculated individually across the calendar year. Finally, the bill expands upon the requirements for a prisoner's reentry plan, including requiring an assessment, if necessary, of a prisoner's readiness to take a high school equivalency test and any modifications needed for the prisoner to take or improve upon such test, and making available peer and group educational programs developed and led by qualified prisoners.

**Budget Amendment Necessary:** Yes

**Items Impacted:** Item 388 (DOC)

**Explanation:** See below.

**Fiscal Summary:**

According to the Department of Corrections (DOC), this proposal will have a significant fiscal impact due to the need for facility renovations and construction, as well as increased staff needed to comply with this bill. However, DOC cannot determine the fiscal impact at this time.

**Fiscal Analysis:**

According to DOC, this bill would result in a significant but currently indeterminate fiscal impact. Per DOC, the fiscal impact is mainly driven by the requirements to accelerate and mandate the expansion of access to employment, education, treatment and reentry programming to all inmates. The bill requires DOC to make appropriate full-time program assignments available to all individuals in DOC within (i) 90 days of a prisoner who has been sentenced to a new term of confinement arriving at a state correctional facility or (ii) 60 days of a prisoner already in custody being transferred to a new state correctional facility. Per DOC, this shortens the existing assignment timeframes by approximately half. According to DOC, this would limit the Department's ability to utilize waitlists, and broadens required programming to include health, wellness and other supportive services, all of which exceed current operational capacity across correctional facilities. DOC reports having longstanding physical space constraints within facilities, which would require substantial capital investment to comply with the provisions of this bill. After the physical infrastructure constraints are

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addressed, the DOC states the Department may need additional positions to include counselors, medical, mental health or educational staff to ensure access to programming and correctional officers for supervision.

DOC states the fiscal impact cannot be quantified without a full assessment of cross-unit impacts and facility-level infrastructure requirements.

**Other:** None.