

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

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB1280S1

Patron: Cole, J.G.

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

Bill Summary: The substitute bill 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 make available to all prisoners in appropriate full-time program assignments or a combination thereof to satisfy the objectives of a treatment plan based on an assessment and evaluation of each prisoner's needs. The substitute 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. The substitute bill states that no prisoner shall be disqualified from or classified as a lower priority to participate in any requested program that would satisfy any element of his case plan pursuant to this section solely due to the length of such prisoner's original or remaining sentence, type of conviction, or participation in any other program. The substitute bill changes language so those who choose not to participate in educational programs are not penalized via being made ineligible to receive Earned Sentence Credits. Finally, the substitute bill contains an enactment clause instructing the Department of Corrections to form a work group.

Budget Amendment Necessary: Indeterminate **Items Impacted:** Indeterminate

Explanation: See below.

Fiscal Summary:

According to the Department of Corrections (DOC), this bill will not have a fiscal impact on agency operations. The Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) anticipates this bill could result in an indeterminate fiscal impact on DOC.

Fiscal Analysis:

DOC reports that the bill's expanded requirements for recovery training, technological literacy training, socioemotional development, mental health and wellness support, health literacy, relationship skills, social capital skills development, financial literacy are in line with the Department's current practices. As such, DOC states the requirements of this bill can be implemented with existing agency resources.

The Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) anticipates this bill could result in an indeterminate fiscal impact on DOC. This bill broadens required programming to include health, wellness and other supportive services. DOC reports having longstanding physical space constraints within facilities. Additionally, it is possible

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

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

Other: None.