

Department of Planning and Budget

2008 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number SB 295

House of Origin ☒ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed
Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. Patron Puller

3. Committee Rehabilitation and Social Services

4. Title Parole interviews

5. Summary/Purpose:

For inmates eligible for parole, state law requires the Parole Board to review their cases annually, except for inmates with ten years or more remaining on their sentences. In the latter cases, the reviews can be conducted every three years. Current law authorizes the Parole Board to choose to use its representatives to conduct interviews with inmates during the annual reviews, rather than conducting those interviews by the Board itself.

The proposed legislation would authorize the interviews with inmates to be conducted in person or by videoconferencing. It would continue to allow the Board to use its representatives to conduct the interviews, but would require that such interviews be recorded in full by electronic means that could be reviewed by Board members.

6. Fiscal Impact: Indeterminate. See Item 8.

7. Budget amendment necessary: Unknown. See Item 8.

8. Fiscal implications:

In almost all instances, the Parole Board uses a representative, a hearing officer employed by the Department of Corrections, to conduct the interview with an inmate prior to the Board's periodic review of parole for the inmate. The proposed bill's requirement that all interviews by representatives be "recorded in full via electronic means that can be reviewed by the voting members" could result in additional costs for the Parole Board or the Department of Corrections (DOC).

The bill would authorize the interviews to be conducted via videoconferencing. A videoconference interview could be recorded with little additional expense. The Parole Board and DOC currently do conduct some interviews by videoconference, but not all correctional facilities have videoconferencing capability or videoconference equipment set up in areas that would be appropriate for parole interviews.

Similarly, many correctional facilities have extensive closed circuit surveillance systems that constantly record areas under surveillance. However, not all correctional facilities have such systems and, for those that do, the systems would probably need to be modified to enable a particular planned event, such as a parole interview, to be recorded in a format that would enable it to be readily available for members of the Parole Board to review.

To implement the requirements set out in the proposed legislation, DOC would likely incur additional costs to purchase new recording equipment or to modify existing equipment. It is not feasible at this point to estimate the potential magnitude of this cost.

9. Specific agency or political subdivisions affected:

Department of Corrections
Virginia Parole Board

10. Technical amendment necessary: No.

11. Other comments:

DOC is currently in the second stage of developing the second stage of its new automated offender management and information system, CORIS. It is anticipated that, when completed in about three years, the system will provide DOC and the Parole Board the capability to record parole interviews as required by the legislation.

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