

Department of Planning and Budget

2008 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number SB 138

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

2. Patron Puller

3. Committee Rehabilitation and Social Services

4. Title Medical and psychiatric benefits for prisoners

5. Summary/Purpose:

The proposed legislation would require the Department of Corrections to identify any medical or psychiatric benefits, including Social Security and Veterans Administration benefits, to which an inmate may be entitled upon his release from prison and to assist the offender in securing such benefits. The legislation would also require the department to identify those benefits in a timely enough manner that the benefits would be available at the time of the offender's release.

6. No Fiscal Impact: Preliminary. See Item 8.

7. Budget amendment necessary: None.

8. Fiscal implications:

The Department of Corrections currently prepares a "release plan" for each offender prior to his release. This plan identifies where the offender will be living while he is under probation supervision, as well as any special needs, such as medical, that he may have. The plan is prepared by the counseling staff at the correctional facility from which the offender will be released, in coordination with staff in the department's central office and staff in the probation and parole district to which the offender will be released.

It is during the preparation of these release plans that the identification of potential medical and psychiatric benefits, required by the proposed legislation, would be undertaken. Identifying and helping the offender secure such benefits can be time-consuming. However, the department has recently been provided additional resources to assist in the transition of offenders to society. In recent years, the department has received funding for additional transitional staff in the central office. Furthermore, the introduced budget includes funding for the establishment of transition centers in three correctional centers, as well as funding for transition specialists to be placed in the probation and parole districts in the areas to which most offenders are returned upon their release. With the counseling and transitional staff it

now has, as well as the additional staff provided in the introduced budget, the department should be able to accomplish the bill's requirements without any additional fiscal impact.

9. Specific agency or political subdivisions affected:

Department of Corrections

10. Technical amendment necessary: None.

11. Other comments: None.

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