

Department of Planning and Budget 2011 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB 1316

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

2. Patron: McEachin

3. Committee: Rehabilitation and Social Services

4. Title: Earned sentence credits

5. Summary:

Current law allows inmates to earn a maximum of four and one-half sentence credits for each 30 days served, contingent, in part, on good behavior. The proposed legislation would increase the maximum number of sentence credits that could be earned to seven and one-half for each 30 days served.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: None.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Not available. See Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications:

The Department of Corrections has projected that the proposed legislation would result in prison bed savings as shown in the following table:

	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Annual bed impact	(1,068)	(1,627)	(1,877)	(2,177)	(2,476)

The fiscal implications of the proposed legislation are potentially significant. The immediate effects would be additional costs for the Department of Corrections (DOC) that could be largely offset by savings either in per diem payments to localities for housing state responsible offenders in local and regional jails or the closing of state correctional facilities. For the longer term, there could be significant reductions in future projected prison costs.

The most immediate cost would be that needed to reprogram DOC's automated time calculation system. DOC would also need additional probation and parole officers to handle the increase in offenders being released on probation.

These additional costs could be offset in one of two ways. DOC could reduce the number of state offenders that would otherwise be housed in local and regional jails. Because the state reimburses localities \$12 per day to house these offenders, there would be savings in these costs. On the other hand, it could be decided not to reduce the number of state offenders being held in jails, but to close DOC facilities, instead. There are a number of factors that would need to be considered in making the decision on which route to take. Among those factors would be the projected number of state and local responsible inmates in the next six years and the projection of available jail bed space. In either case, however, there would be cost savings.

The proposed legislation could, furthermore, alter the need for new prisons. Currently, there is no new prison construction planned and one newly-constructed prison has not been opened. However, due to the state's population growth, if nothing else, it is felt that the state will likely need to build a new prison sometime within the next six years. The proposed legislation, reducing the length of time that offenders stay in prison, could push the timetable for that prison further into the future, thereby saving operating costs.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Corrections

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: None.

11. Other Comments: None.

Date: 1/25/2011

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