

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2014 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Criminal Justice

CS/CS/HB 53 — Inmate Reentry

by Judiciary Committee; Justice Appropriations Subcommittee; and Reps. Stone, Baxley, and others (CS/CS/SB 274 by Appropriations Committee; Criminal Justice Committee; and Senator Simmons)

The bill requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide every Florida-born inmate with a certified copy of their birth certificate and a state identification card before release from prison. To obtain a birth certificate, the DOC must submit a photo and specified personal information of all Florida-born inmates in its custody to the Department of Health (DOH). The DOC is also required to assist all inmates with obtaining a social security card before release, if needed.

Under the bill, the DOC would be required to assist inmates born outside of Florida with completing forms needed to apply for a social security card, driver license, or state identification card. The DOC must also provide the inmate with the address of the appropriate agency near his or her expected release address where an identification card can be obtained.

The bill amends s. 382.0255, F.S., to require the DOH to waive all fees for a Florida-born inmate to acquire a certified copy of his or her birth certification through the new process created in the bill. It also amends ss. 322.051 and 322.17, F.S., to require the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) to issue an original state identification card or a replacement state identification card or replacement driver license, if a valid card exists, for no charge to a Florida-born inmate who obtains the card through the new process created in the bill. A replacement state identification card or replacement driver license will only be issued when the DOC has determined the inmate has a valid state identification card or valid Florida driver license (not expired) which has been lost, stolen, or destroyed. The bill authorizes the DHSMV to issue a temporary permit, valid for up to 6 months, to those inmates whose replacement identification card or replacement driver license is within 6 months of expiration.

The DOC is not required to provide a birth certificate and state identification card to a Florida-born inmate who:

- Already has a valid driver license or state identification card;
- Has an active detainer, unless cancellation of the detainer is likely or if the incarceration for which the detainer was issued will be for less than twelve months;
- Is released due to emergency release or conditional medical release;
- Is not in the DOC's physical custody at or within 180 days before release; or
- Is subject to sex offender residency restrictions and does not have a qualifying address.

The bill requires the DOC to make an annual report providing the number of inmates who were released with or without identification cards during the previous year, identifying any impediments to implementation of the identification card program, and recommending any needed improvements in obtaining release documents and identification cards for all inmates.

The bill amends s. 944.803, F.S., to encourage the DOC to maintain faith and character-based institutions to serve both male and female inmates. Currently, three faith and character-based institutions exist for males; one exists for females. The bill also requires faith and character-based institutions to offer peer-to-peer programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and literacy instruction.

The bill provides an appropriation for fiscal year 2014-2015 for \$221,276 in recurring funds and \$243,782 in nonrecurring funds from the Highway Safety Operating Trust Fund to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles for purchasing, equipping, and operating mobile licensing vehicles whose primary responsibility shall be to issue identification and licensing credentials to inmates before their release from the custody of the Department of Corrections.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2014.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 116-1