

By the Committee on Corrections and Representative
Trovillion

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to inmate's family
3 communications and visitation programs;
4 amending s. 944.8031, F.S.; providing
5 legislative findings relating to telephone
6 communications plans for inmates; requiring a
7 report to the Legislature and the Department of
8 Management Services; requiring the Department
9 of Management Services to select a
10 communications plan to be implemented by the
11 Department of Corrections and to issue a
12 request for proposals therefor; providing for
13 commissions to be collected by the Department
14 of Corrections and to be deposited into the
15 Inmate Welfare Trust Fund; revising provisions
16 relating to visitation; providing an effective
17 date.

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19 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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21 Section 1. Section 944.8031, Florida Statutes, is
22 amended to read:

23 944.8031 Inmate's family communications and
24 visitation; legislative intent; minimum services provided to
25 visitors; budget requests.--

26 (1) The Legislature finds that maintaining an inmate's
27 communication and relationship with family and community
28 members by providing reasonably priced telephone
29 communications, enhanced ~~relationships through enhancing~~
30 visitor services, and programs that increase and increasing
31 the frequency and quality of communication and visitation are

1 ~~the visits is an~~ underutilized correctional resources. These
2 resources ~~resource that~~ can improve an inmate's behavior in
3 the correctional facility, assist an inmate in developing
4 sound parental relations with his or her children and thereby
5 decrease the likelihood of incarceration for these children,
6 and, upon an inmate's release from a correctional facility,
7 will help to reduce the recidivism of that individual.

8 (2) The Legislature finds that the current telephone
9 contracts for inmates' telephone calls maintained by the
10 department were developed without sufficient consideration
11 being given to the effect of family contact on recidivism.
12 The current cost of the calls to the recipients does not
13 promote family contact or communications.

14 (3)(a) The department, in conjunction with the Florida
15 Corrections Commission and the Public Service Commission,
16 shall jointly survey the existing communications plans,
17 contract lengths, and telephone security measures used by the
18 federal prison system and all state prison systems and explore
19 additional alternative communications plans with
20 telecommunications companies. Alternative communications plans
21 include, but are not limited to, debit calling, the use of
22 personal identification number calling, and fingerprint or
23 voice identification calling.

24 (b) After completion of the joint survey and
25 exploration of additional alternatives, the department, the
26 Public Service Commission, and the Florida Corrections
27 Commission shall each prepare and furnish to the Secretary of
28 Management Services, the Speaker of the House of
29 Representatives, and the President of the Senate a report
30 presenting the merits and disadvantages of the different types
31 of communication plans used by other states and the Federal

1 Government. Each report shall include consideration of the
2 security needs of the department, the financial burden to the
3 families and other individuals telephoned, and the
4 availability of telecommunications options to the inmates.
5 These reports shall also contain a recommendation for a final
6 communications plan which thoroughly explains the type of
7 phone service and security options to be used, and which shall
8 be submitted no later than July 15, 2000.

9 (c) The Division of Information Technology of the
10 Department of Management Services shall review each report
11 submitted and, if deemed necessary, shall employ a security
12 specialist to review the security portion of the
13 communications plan. The division shall, after consultation
14 with the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the
15 President of the Senate, select the final communications plan
16 to be implemented by the Department of Corrections, with
17 selection of the plan occurring no later than than August 15,
18 2000.

19 (4) Following selection of the final communications
20 plan, the Division of Information Technology and, if deemed
21 necessary, a telephone security specialist hired by the
22 division, shall develop a request for proposals for inmate
23 telephone communications. In developing the pricing structure
24 to be evaluated, the division shall place primary importance
25 upon a reduction of end user costs for both interstate and
26 intrastate calls and place secondary importance upon the
27 commissions to be paid into the Inmate Welfare Trust Fund. The
28 division may establish such other criteria as it deems
29 necessary. The division shall award no less than one and no
30 more than two contracts for telephone services.

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1 (5) The Division of Information Technology shall
2 incorporate, as a provision of each contract, that the
3 department shall receive the funds generated under subsection
4 (4), which shall be deposited into the Inmate Welfare Trust
5 Fund. The department shall not receive any other commissions,
6 fees, goods, or services relating to inmate telephone
7 services.

8 ~~(6)(2)~~ The department shall provide, at a minimum, the
9 following services or items at designated visiting areas for
10 approved visitors in state correctional facilities in order to
11 benefit the communications and visitation process:

12 (a) Information relating to applicable visiting
13 regulations, dress codes, and visiting procedures.

14 (b) A sheltered area, outside the security perimeter,
15 for visitors waiting before and after visiting inmates.

16 ~~(c)~~ A sheltered area offering chapel services for
17 inmates and their families and visitors to attend together.

18 ~~(d)(c)~~ Food services with food choices which are
19 nutritious and acceptable for children and youth visitors.

20 ~~(e)(d)~~ Minimal equipment and supplies which assist
21 staff and visitors in managing and occupying the time and
22 meeting the needs of children and youth visitors, including
23 books, simple games, video players, and movies conducive to
24 family interaction.

25 ~~(7)(3)~~ Upon determining any deficiencies and barriers
26 to the effective and efficient operation of the department's
27 visitation program and services, the secretary shall submit
28 annual budget requests identifying capital improvements,
29 staffing, and programmatic needs necessary to improve the
30 quality and frequency of family visits and the visitation
31 program and services.

1 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
2 law.

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5 HOUSE SUMMARY

6 Provides legislative findings relating to telephone
7 communications plans for inmates. Requires a report to
8 the Legislature and the Department of Management
9 Services. Requires the Department of Management Services
10 to select a communications plan to be implemented by the
11 Department of Corrections and to issue a request for
12 proposals therefor. Provides for commissions to be
13 collected by the department. Revises provisions relating
14 to visitation.
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