

By Senator Wilson

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to video visitation for inmates;  
3       amending s. 944.09, F.S.; authorizing the Department  
4       of Corrections to adopt rules to install and operate  
5       an inmate video visitation system in the correctional  
6       facilities in this state; amending s. 944.8031, F.S.;  
7       encouraging the department to use communication  
8       technology equipment to operate an inmate video  
9       visitation system to increase the frequency and  
10      quality of the visits between an inmate and the  
11      inmate's family; providing an effective date.

12  
13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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15       Section 1. Paragraph (s) is added to subsection (1) of  
16      section 944.09, Florida Statutes, to read:

17       944.09 Rules of the department; offenders, probationers,  
18      and parolees.—

19       (1) The department has authority to adopt rules pursuant to  
20      ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement its statutory authority.  
21      The rules must include rules relating to:

22       (s) The installation and operation of an inmate video  
23      visitation system as provided in s. 944.8031.

24       Section 2. Section 944.8031, Florida Statutes, is amended  
25      to read:

26       944.8031 Inmate's family visitation; legislative intent;  
27      minimum services provided to visitors; inmate video visitation  
28      system; budget requests.—

29       (1) The Legislature finds that maintaining an inmate's

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30 family and community relationships through enhancing visitor  
31 services and programs, ~~and~~ increasing the frequency and quality  
32 of the visits, and increasing access by inmates to their  
33 families by using available technologies through an inmate  
34 visitation system are ~~is an~~ underutilized correctional resources  
35 ~~resource~~ that can improve an inmate's behavior in the  
36 correctional facility and, upon an inmate's release from a  
37 correctional facility, will help to reduce recidivism.

38 (2) The department shall provide, at a minimum, the  
39 following services at designated visiting areas for approved  
40 visitors in state correctional facilities:

41 (a) Information relating to applicable visiting  
42 regulations, dress codes, and visiting procedures.

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

45 (c) Food services with food choices which are nutritious  
46 and acceptable for children and youth visitors.

47 (d) Minimal equipment and supplies which assist staff and  
48 visitors in managing and occupying the time and meeting the  
49 needs of children and youth visitors.

50 (3) In furtherance of the intent of the Legislature, the  
51 department shall:

52 (a) Evaluate the feasibility of installing and operating an  
53 inmate video visitation system that uses an appropriate mobile  
54 computer equipped with a web camera and microphone headset, or a  
55 preinstalled, permanently fixed kiosk, which is capable of  
56 communicating with a visitor's personal computer at a site  
57 outside the correctional facility and is cost neutral to the  
58 state;

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59       (b) Estimate the startup and operational costs for such an  
60 inmate video visitation system;

61       (c) Prepare a model departmental website to which visitors  
62 may communicate in order to visit an inmate; and

63       (d) Prepare a cost schedule that is designed to require  
64 that the inmate or the inmate's family pay all expenses  
65 associated with the privilege of using the inmate video  
66 visitation equipment.

67       (4) ~~(3)~~ Upon determining any deficiencies and barriers to  
68 the effective and efficient operation of the department's  
69 visitation program and services or the implementation and  
70 operation of the inmate video visitation system, the secretary  
71 shall submit annual budget requests identifying capital  
72 improvements, staffing, and programmatic needs necessary to  
73 improve the quality and frequency of family visits and the  
74 visitation program and services.

75       Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2010.