

By Senator Braynon

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1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to faith- and character-based
 3 correctional institution programs; amending s.
 4 944.803, F.S.; revising legislative findings;
 5 providing requirements for faith- and character-based
 6 programs; deleting provisions relating to funding;
 7 revising requirements for participation by inmates in
 8 such programs; deleting provisions requiring the
 9 assignment of chaplains to community correctional
 10 centers; providing an effective date.

11
 12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

13
 14 Section 1. Section 944.803, Florida Statutes, is amended to
 15 read:

16 944.803 Faith- and character-based ~~Faith-based~~ programs ~~for~~
 17 ~~inmates.~~-

18 (1) The Legislature finds and declares that faith- and
 19 character-based ~~faith-based~~ programs offered in state and
 20 private correctional institutions and facilities have the
 21 potential to facilitate inmate institutional adjustment, help
 22 inmates assume personal responsibility, and reduce recidivism.

23 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the department
 24 ~~of Corrections~~ and the private vendors operating private
 25 correctional facilities ~~shall~~ continuously:

26 (a) Measure recidivism rates for inmates who have
 27 participated in faith- and character-based ~~religious~~ programs.~~†~~

28 (b) Increase the number of volunteers who minister to
 29 inmates from various faith-based and secular institutions in the

33-01307-11

20112010__

30 community.

31 (c) Develop community linkages with secular institutions,
32 as well as churches, synagogues, mosques, and other faith-based
33 institutions, to assist inmates in their release back into the
34 community.

35 ~~(d) Fund through the use of annual appropriations, in~~
36 ~~department facilities, and through inmate welfare trust funds~~
37 ~~pursuant to s. 945.215, in private facilities, an adequate~~
38 ~~number of chaplains and support staff to operate faith-based~~
39 ~~programs in correctional institutions.~~

40 (3) (a) ~~The department must have at least six new programs~~
41 ~~fully operational. These six programs shall be similar to and in~~
42 ~~addition to the current faith-based pilot program. The six new~~
43 ~~programs shall be a joint effort with the department and faith-~~
44 ~~based service groups within the community.~~ The department shall
45 ensure that an inmate's faith orientation, or lack thereof, will
46 not be considered in determining admission to a faith- and
47 character-based ~~faith-based~~ program and that the program does
48 not attempt to convert an inmate toward a particular faith or
49 religious preference.

50 (b) The programs shall operate 24 hours a day within the
51 existing correctional facilities and. ~~The programs~~ must
52 emphasize the importance of personal responsibility, meaningful
53 work, education, substance abuse treatment, and peer support.

54 (c) Participation in a ~~the faith-based dormitory~~ program
55 shall be voluntary. ~~However, at least 80 percent of the inmates~~
56 ~~participating in this program must be within 36 months of~~
57 ~~release.~~ Assignment to a program ~~these programs~~ shall be based
58 on evaluation and the length of time the inmate is projected to

33-01307-11

20112010__

59 be assigned to that particular institution. In ~~evaluating an~~
60 ~~inmate for this program, priority shall be given to inmates who~~
61 ~~have shown an indication for substance abuse. A right to~~
62 ~~substance abuse program services is not stated, intended, or~~
63 ~~otherwise implied by this subsection.~~ The department may not
64 remove an inmate once assigned to a ~~the~~ program except for the
65 purposes of population management, for inmate conduct that may
66 subject the inmate to disciplinary confinement or loss of gain-
67 time, for physical or mental health concerns, or for security or
68 safety concerns. ~~To support the programming component, the~~
69 ~~department shall assign a chaplain and a full-time clerical~~
70 ~~support person dedicated to each dormitory to implement and~~
71 ~~monitor the program and to strengthen volunteer participation~~
72 ~~and support.~~

73 ~~(4) The Department of Corrections shall assign chaplains to~~
74 ~~community correctional centers authorized pursuant to s.~~
75 ~~945.091(1)(b). These chaplains shall strengthen volunteer~~
76 ~~participation by recruiting volunteers in the community to~~
77 ~~assist inmates in transition, and, if requested by the inmate,~~
78 ~~placement in a mentoring program or at a contracted substance~~
79 ~~abuse transition housing program. When placing an inmate in a~~
80 ~~contracted program, the chaplain shall work with the~~
81 ~~institutional transition assistance specialist in an effort to~~
82 ~~successfully place the released inmate.~~

83 ~~(4)(5)~~ (4) The department shall ensure that any faith component
84 of any program authorized in this chapter is offered on a
85 voluntary basis and, an offender's faith orientation, or lack
86 thereof, will not be considered in determining admission to such
87 a ~~faith-based~~ program and that the program does not attempt to

33-01307-11

20112010__

88 convert an offender toward a particular faith or religious
89 preference.

90 (5) ~~(6)~~ The department shall ensure that state funds are not
91 expended for the purpose of furthering religious indoctrination,
92 but rather, that state funds are expended for purposes of
93 furthering the secular goals of criminal rehabilitation, the
94 successful reintegration of offenders into the community, and
95 the reduction of recidivism.

96 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2011.