

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

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

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

15 944.803 Faith- and character-based ~~Faith-based~~ programs  
 16 ~~for inmates.-~~

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

22 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the  
 23 department expand the faith- and character-based initiative  
 24 through the use of faith- and character-based institutions. The  
 25 department is encouraged to phase out the faith-based and self  
 26 improvement dormitory programs and move toward the goal of only  
 27 implementing faith- and character-based institutions.

28 (3) ~~(2)~~ It is the intent of the Legislature that the

29 department ~~of Corrections~~ and the private vendors operating  
 30 private correctional facilities shall continuously:

31 (a) Measure recidivism rates for inmates who have  
 32 participated in faith- and character-based ~~religious~~ programs.~~;~~

33 (b) Increase the number of volunteers who minister to  
 34 inmates from various faith-based and secular institutions in the  
 35 community.~~;~~

36 (c) Develop community linkages with secular institutions  
 37 as well as churches, synagogues, mosques, and other faith-based  
 38 institutions to assist inmates in their release back into the  
 39 community.~~;~~ ~~and~~

40 ~~(d) Fund through the use of annual appropriations, in~~  
 41 ~~department facilities, and through inmate welfare trust funds~~  
 42 ~~pursuant to s. 945.215, in private facilities, an adequate~~  
 43 ~~number of chaplains and support staff to operate faith-based~~  
 44 ~~programs in correctional institutions.~~

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

55 (b) The programs shall operate 24 hours a day within the  
 56 existing correctional facilities and. ~~The programs must~~

57 emphasize the importance of personal responsibility, meaningful  
58 work, education, substance abuse treatment, and peer support.

59 (c) Participation in a ~~the faith-based dormitory~~ program  
60 shall be voluntary. ~~However, at least 80 percent of the inmates~~  
61 ~~participating in this program must be within 36 months of~~  
62 ~~release.~~ Assignment to a program ~~these programs~~ shall be based  
63 on evaluation and the length of time the inmate is projected to  
64 be assigned to that particular institution. ~~In evaluating an~~  
65 ~~inmate for this program, priority shall be given to inmates who~~  
66 ~~have shown an indication for substance abuse. A right to~~  
67 ~~substance abuse program services is not stated, intended, or~~  
68 ~~otherwise implied by this subsection.~~ The department may not  
69 remove an inmate once assigned to a ~~the~~ program except for the  
70 purposes of population management, for inmate conduct that may  
71 subject the inmate to disciplinary confinement or loss of gain-  
72 time, for physical or mental health concerns, or for security or  
73 safety concerns. ~~To support the programming component, the~~  
74 ~~department shall assign a chaplain and a full-time clerical~~  
75 ~~support person dedicated to each dormitory to implement and~~  
76 ~~monitor the program and to strengthen volunteer participation~~  
77 ~~and support.~~

78 ~~(4) The Department of Corrections shall assign chaplains~~  
79 ~~to community correctional centers authorized pursuant to s.~~  
80 ~~945.091(1)(b). These chaplains shall strengthen volunteer~~  
81 ~~participation by recruiting volunteers in the community to~~  
82 ~~assist inmates in transition, and, if requested by the inmate,~~  
83 ~~placement in a mentoring program or at a contracted substance~~  
84 ~~abuse transition housing program. When placing an inmate in a~~

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85 ~~contracted program, the chaplain shall work with the~~  
86 ~~institutional transition assistance specialist in an effort to~~  
87 ~~successfully place the released inmate.~~

88 (5) The department shall ensure that any faith component  
89 of any program authorized in this chapter is offered on a  
90 voluntary basis and, an offender's faith orientation, or lack  
91 thereof, will not be considered in determining admission to such  
92 a ~~faith-based~~ program and that the program does not attempt to  
93 convert an offender toward a particular faith or religious  
94 preference.

95 (6) The department shall ensure that state funds are not  
96 expended for the purpose of furthering religious indoctrination,  
97 but rather, that state funds are expended for purposes of  
98 furthering the secular goals of criminal rehabilitation, the  
99 successful reintegration of offenders into the community, and  
100 the reduction of recidivism.

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