

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
FINAL BILL ANALYSIS**

**BILL #:** HB 685

**FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION:**

**SPONSOR(S):** McBurney and others

118 Y's

0 N's

**COMPANION (SB 742)  
BILLS:**

**GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

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**SUMMARY ANALYSIS**

HB 685 passed the House on April 17, 2013, and subsequently passed the Senate on April 30, 2013.

Currently, the Florida Parole Commission re-interviews parole eligible inmates to review the inmate's presumptive parole release date (PPRD). Generally, inmates are re-interviewed every two years. However, the statute provides for re-interviews every seven years if an inmate's PPRD is more than seven years from the date of the initial interview and if the inmate is serving a 25-year minimum mandatory sentence previously provided under s. 775.082, F.S., or the inmate was convicted of:

- Murder;
- Attempted murder;
- Sexual battery; or
- Attempted sexual battery.

This bill increases the intervals between parole interview dates from two to seven years for inmates convicted of:

- Kidnapping or attempted kidnapping; or
- Robbery, burglary of dwelling, burglary of a structure or conveyance, or breaking and entering, or an attempt thereof of any of these crimes, in which a human being is present and a sexual act is completed or attempted.

This bill will not have a fiscal impact on the commission in Fiscal Year 2013-2014; however the bill will have a minimal positive fiscal impact in subsequent years. See Fiscal Section. Additionally, on February 27, 2013, the Criminal Justice Impact Conference determined that this bill would not have a prison bed impact.

The bill was approved by the Governor on June 5, 2013, ch. 2013-119, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2013.

## I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

### A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

#### Current Situation

Parole is a discretionary prison release mechanism administered by the Florida Parole Commission (commission) through chs. 947, 948, and 949, F.S. An inmate who is granted parole is allowed to serve the remainder of his or her prison sentence outside of confinement according to terms and conditions established by the commission.<sup>1</sup> Parolees are supervised by Correctional Probation Officers employed by the Department of Corrections (DOC). Parole is not available for most crimes that were committed on or after October 1, 1983.<sup>2</sup> There is no parole eligibility for any crime committed on or after October 1, 1995.

The parole process begins with setting a presumptive parole release date (PPRD) by the commission after a hearing examiner reviews the inmate's file, conducts an initial interview with the inmate, and makes an initial recommendation to a panel of commissioners.<sup>3</sup> The PPRD is the tentative parole release date as determined by objective parole guidelines.<sup>4</sup> An inmate may request one review of the initial PPRD within 60 days after notification.<sup>5</sup> Otherwise, the PPRD is not reviewed until a hearing examiner holds subsequent interviews with the inmate.<sup>6</sup>

Subsequent interviews for review of the PPRD may be held every two or seven years depending on the offense the inmate was convicted of.<sup>7</sup> Generally, inmates are re-interviewed every two years.<sup>8</sup> However, s. 947.174(1)(b), F.S., provides for less frequent reviews if an inmate's PPRD is more than seven years from the date of the initial interview and if the inmate was convicted of: murder, attempted murder, sexual battery, or attempted sexual battery, or is serving a 25-year minimum mandatory sentence previously provided under s. 775.082, F.S. In such cases, the subsequent interviews may be conducted every seven years if the commission makes a written finding that it is not reasonable to expect that parole will be granted.<sup>9,10</sup>

Subsequent interviews are limited to determining whether information has been gathered that might affect the PPRD.<sup>11</sup> DOC is responsible for bringing to the attention of the commission any information that may be pertinent for review, such as an inmate's current progress reports, psychological reports, and disciplinary reports.<sup>12</sup>

After an interview is conducted the hearing examiner sends his or her report and recommendation to a panel of commissioners.<sup>13</sup> The inmate's case is then added to the docket of the next available parole hearing where the commission will hear public testimony and make a final decision regarding the PPRD

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<sup>1</sup> *Extended Interviews Detailed Analysis*, Florida Parole Commission, provided to House Committee Staff on February 18, 2013 (on file with the Criminal Justice Subcommittee).

<sup>2</sup> The exceptions are for capital felony murders committed prior to October 1, 1994, and capital felony sexual battery prior to October 1, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Section 947.172, F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 947.005(8), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 947.173(1), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 947.174, F.S.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> In addition, s. 947.16(4), F.S., provides that at the time of sentencing, a judge may enter an order to retain jurisdiction over an offender for review of a commission release order to grant parole. If the judge vacates the parole release order and denies the parole, the offender shall be re-interviewed by the commission every two or seven years as determined by the same criteria described in this cited paragraph.

<sup>11</sup> Section 947.174(1)(c), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 947.174(3), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Rule 23-21.0052, F.A.C.

recommendation. Inmates are not permitted to attend parole hearings.<sup>14</sup> At parole hearings, victims and their families, inmates' families, attorneys, law enforcement, and other interested parties may address the commission.<sup>15</sup>

The hearing examiner conducts a final interview of the inmate within 90 days of the PPRD in order to set an effective parole release date and to establish a parole release plan.<sup>16</sup> The commission is required to give notice to the sentencing court prior to this final interview.<sup>17</sup> If the court objects to the offender's release, the objection can be an exceptional circumstance under s. 947.173, F.S., which authorizes the commission to cancel the final interview and reset the case for future review.<sup>18</sup> If the court does not object and the final interview is held, the commission then holds a final public hearing at which it decides whether the inmate's parole release plan is satisfactory and whether to authorize the effective parole release date and enter a release order.<sup>19</sup>

### **Effect of the Bill**

As noted above, the commission re-interviews parole eligible inmates to review the inmate's PPRD. Generally, inmates are re-interviewed every two years. However, s. 947.174(1)(b), F.S., provides for re-interviews every seven years if an inmate's PPRD is more than seven years from the date of the initial interview and if the inmate is serving a 25-year minimum mandatory sentence under s. 775.082, F.S., or the inmate was convicted of:

- Murder;
- Attempted murder;
- Sexual battery; or
- Attempted sexual battery.

The bill amends ss. 947.16, 947.174, and 947.1745, F.S., to increase the intervals between parole interview dates from two to seven years for inmates convicted of:

- Kidnapping or attempted kidnapping; or
- Robbery, burglary of dwelling, burglary of a structure or conveyance, or breaking and entering, or an attempt thereof of any of these crimes, in which a human being is present and a sexual act is completed or attempted.

The bill reenacts s. 947.165, F.S., to incorporate the amendments to s. 947.1745, F.S.

## **II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

### **A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:**

#### **1. Revenues:**

The bill does not appear to have any impact on state revenues.

#### **2. Expenditures:**

This bill will not have a fiscal impact on the commission in Fiscal Year 2013-2014; however the bill will have a minimal positive fiscal impact in subsequent years. According to the commission, inmates would be informed of any changes to the law regarding subsequent interview dates at their

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<sup>14</sup> Rule 23-21.004, F.A.C.

<sup>15</sup> The commission's Victims' Services unit provides advance notice to victims of upcoming parole proceedings. Section 947.06, F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 947.1745(1), F.S.

<sup>17</sup> Section 947.1745(6), F.S.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> Rule 23-21.015, F.A.C.

next scheduled interview. They would be informed that, upon passage of this bill, the commission may set a subsequent interview within seven years rather than within two. The bill does not remove the inmate's limited due process rights or the mechanism for the inmate to request the commission to consider setting an earlier interview date which is currently in place.

This bill will have no effect on the current review dates that are presently set for parole eligible inmates. This bill would only affect those inmates whose review dates occur after the effective date of the bill. Therefore, the inmates' interview dates that fall between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2015, would not be affected by the bill until after that interview when they are informed their next interview would be in seven years instead of two.

Last year, the commission staff reviewed extensively the 842 initial, extraordinary, and subsequent interviews from commission dockets from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. Of the total cases docketed, 534 cases had already been given a seven year subsequent interview date; 264 cases were not affected because their review date was not addressed by the bill and remained within two years; and 44 cases could have been affected and could have had their next interview date set for seven years after being informed of the law change at their next two year review. According to the commission, this eligible pool of inmates has not changed significantly since last year's analysis.

Therefore, based on that analysis, 44 cases may be affected by the bill in Fiscal Year 2015-2016 and could have their next interview date set within seven years instead of within two years. This equated to a total savings to the Commission of 166 hours annually (44 x 3.78 hours per case) or approximately 1/12 of an FTE for the FY 2011-2012 eligible pool of inmates.

It is reasonable to assume that in the subsequent years, the savings should compound as other eligible inmates review dates are changed from two to seven years, but the savings associated with the remaining eligible pool is also expected to be minimal.

#### B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

##### 1. Revenues:

The bill does not appear to have any impact on local government revenues.

##### 2. Expenditures:

The bill does not appear to have any impact on local government expenditures.

#### C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

#### D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.