

By Senator Rouson

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Criminal Justice Commission;
3 creating s. 945.231, F.S.; creating the commission
4 within the Department of Corrections; specifying the
5 purpose of the commission; providing for membership of
6 the commission; specifying terms of commission
7 members; requiring the commission to take specified
8 actions; providing reporting requirements; authorizing
9 the commission to take specified actions; providing an
10 effective date.

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12 WHEREAS, in 2023, this state spent \$2.3 million on a report
13 to develop a master plan for the state prison system, and

14 WHEREAS, the state-commissioned KPMG Master Plan Report
15 analyzed this state's correctional system and suggested ways to
16 improve it over the next 20 years, and

17 WHEREAS, the report recommended numerous areas for
18 improvement, including addressing workforce shortages and
19 planning for improved correctional facilities, and

20 WHEREAS, the report also recommended that this state create
21 a criminal justice commission modeled after those in existence
22 in other states, and

23 WHEREAS, though several steps have been taken in addressing
24 concerns raised in the report, the creation of a state criminal
25 justice commission may help facilitate further positive reforms
26 to the state's correctional system, NOW, THEREFORE,

27
28 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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30 Section 1. Section 945.231, Florida Statutes, is created to
31 read:

32 945.231 Criminal Justice Commission.—

33 (1) There is created the Criminal Justice Commission. The
34 commission is assigned to the department for administrative
35 purposes but shall exercise its duties independently of the
36 department.

37 (2) The purpose of the commission is to evaluate, advise,
38 and make policy recommendations regarding this state's criminal
39 justice system which analyze the next 20 years of needs and
40 challenges in the state correctional system. The commission
41 shall help advance long-term strategic improvements in criminal
42 justice policy, workforce capacity, facility planning, and
43 systemwide reform.

44 (3) The commission shall be composed of the following
45 members:

46 (a) One member appointed by the President of the Senate.

47 (b) One member appointed by the Speaker of the House of
48 Representatives.

49 (c) The Attorney General, or his or her designee.

50 (d) The secretary of the department, or his or her
51 designee.

52 (e) One member, appointed by the Governor, who is a
53 sheriff, a chief of police, or a representative of a state law
54 enforcement agency.

55 (f) One member, appointed by the Speaker of the House of
56 Representatives, who is a representative of a victim's rights
57 organization, a criminal justice reform advocate, a formerly
58 incarcerated individual, or a reentry program leader.

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59 (g) One member, appointed by the President of the Senate,
60 who is a professor or researcher specializing in criminology,
61 public policy, or law or a data analyst with expertise in
62 criminal justice metrics.

63 (4) Members shall serve up to two 4-year terms. For the
64 purpose of achieving staggered terms, the initial appointments
65 under paragraphs (3) (e), (f), and (g) shall be for 2 years. Any
66 vacancy must be filled by appointment by the original appointing
67 authority for the unexpired portion of the term. The members
68 shall elect from among the committee's membership a chair and
69 vice chair, who shall hold their respective positions for 2-year
70 terms.

71 (5) The commission shall do all of the following:

72 (a) Evaluate and recommend strategic initiatives derived
73 from the findings of the 2023 KPMG Master Plan Report, including
74 recommendations concerning correctional workforce development,
75 facilities modernization, long-term capacity planning, and
76 operational reforms.

77 (b) Conduct comprehensive reviews of the state's criminal
78 justice system, including, but not limited to, policing,
79 sentencing, corrections, and community supervision.

80 (c) Recommend reforms to ensure fair, proportional, and
81 evidence-based punishment.

82 (d) Assess corrections policies, including, but not limited
83 to, prison conditions, parole, probation, and supervised
84 release.

85 (e) Promote, evaluate, and recommend reentry initiatives
86 designed to reduce recidivism and assist returning citizens.

87 (f) Address racial, economic, disability-related, and

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88 geographic disparities in the criminal justice system.

89 (g) Collect, maintain, and analyze data-driven metrics on
90 crime rates, sentencing patterns, incarceration trends, and
91 correctional outcomes.

92 (h) Issue an initial report by July 1, 2027, and annually
93 thereafter, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and
94 the Speaker of the House of Representatives containing findings,
95 performance metrics, and policy recommendations.

96 (6) The commission may do all of the following:

97 (a) Conduct public hearings, listening sessions, and
98 community outreach and solicit testimony from experts,
99 stakeholders, and affected communities.

100 (b) Request and receive data, reports, and information from
101 state agencies, law enforcement agencies, and the judiciary.

102 (c) Develop pilot programs, grant proposals, or
103 demonstration projects testing innovative criminal justice
104 reform strategies or correctional improvements.

105 (d) Partner with academic institutions, research
106 organizations, or national experts to conduct impact studies,
107 cost-benefit analyses, and system evaluations.

108 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.