

HCS HB 1220 -- CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO INCARCERATED MOTHERS

SPONSOR: Nasheed (Hubbard)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Urban Issues by a vote of 5 to 2.

Beginning January 1, 2013, this substitute requires the Department of Corrections, in cooperation with the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services, to establish a two-year pilot project to increase the access that children, from birth to 17 years of age, have to their incarcerated mothers. The project must cover the Chillicothe Correctional Center and the Women's Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center. The department and the division must collaborate on the project by providing transportation for visits once a month or through any other means available to increase children's visitation with mothers who still have parental rights. Transportation for the caretakers of children must also be provided, and the caretakers are required to attend the visits. The project must focus on, but cannot be limited to, children who live 50 miles or more from the facility where the mother is located. Funding for the project must come from existing appropriations or any funds specifically appropriated for the project. At the end of the two-year pilot project, the department and division directors must submit a joint report to the Governor and the General Assembly by February 1, 2016, on the efficacy of the project on both children and incarcerated mothers as well as the project cost and make recommendations on whether to expand the project and on any needed changes.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Net Cost on General Revenue Fund of Unknown - could exceed \$100,000 in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that maintaining a relationship with their children is a positive motivating factor for incarcerated women, and it helps provide stability for their children.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hubbard; Jennifer Cretton, Mothers Incarcerated; Sr. Jackie Gobin, Let's Start; Dr. Jeffrey B. Dorn; Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland, Incorporated; and Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say some technical changes regarding terminology are needed.

Testifying on the bill was Office of Child Advocate.