

HB 1476 -- INMATE MEDICAL TREATMENT CHARGES

SPONSOR: Brattin

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 6 to 3.

This bill requires any inmate receiving an on-site non-emergency medical examination or treatment from the correctional facility's medical staff to be assessed 50 cents per visit. The bill provides specified guidelines the department must follow when authorizing and charging for medical treatment of an inmate.

This bill is the same as HB 268 (2017).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this would discourage some inmates who use seeking non-essential medical treatment as a way to get out of their cells, and this would create a good amount of revenue for the state. Indigent offenders will not be turned away, so receiving necessary medical treatment will not be an issue. Charging inmates a minimal copay has been held constitutional as facilities are not allowed to deny inmates care if they cannot afford to pay.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Brattin.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that this will discourage inmates from seeking necessary but non-emergency medical care, and it could exacerbate many issues that could have been handled as non-essential medical care.

Testifying against the bill was the American Civil Liberties Union.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the Department of Corrections is interested in exploring this matter further.

Testifying on the bill was the Department of Corrections.