

HB 1296 -- CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

SPONSOR: Dinkins

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 9 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 2.

Currently, it is unlawful to possess, deliver, deposit, or conceal certain items in a prison or jail. This bill adds two-way telecommunications devices and their component parts to the list of prohibited items.

The bill provides that the prohibition on telecommunications devices does not apply to law enforcement officers lawfully engaged in their duties or any person who is authorized to use such a device in the facility as specified in the bill. However, the bill prohibits any such person from knowingly delivering, attempting to deliver, or depositing a two-way telecommunications device or its component parts to any inmate, prisoner, or detainee. Anyone refusing to comply with an order to surrender such device or its component parts is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

This bill is the same as HB 70 (2019).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill should help prevent illicit communications between inmates and others for health and safety reasons. Cell phones in prisons are problematic and often used for drug deals.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dinkins; Kevin Merritt, Missouri Sheriffs Association; and Missouri Department of Corrections.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: There were no others testifying on the bill.