

HB 1422-S2.E - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Recognizes the significant impact on the lives and well-being of children and families when a parent is incarcerated. It is the intent of the legislature to support children and families, and maintain familial connections when appropriate, during the period a parent is incarcerated.

Finds that there must be a greater emphasis placed on identifying state policies and programs impacting children with incarcerated parents. Additionally, greater effort must be made to ensure that the policies and programs of the state are supportive of the children, and meet their needs during the time the parent is incarcerated.

Finds that, according to the final report of the children of incarcerated parents oversight committee, helping offenders build durable family relationships may reduce the likelihood that their children will go to prison later in life. Additionally, the report indicates that offenders who reconnect with their families in sustaining ways are less likely to reoffend. In all efforts to help offenders build these relationships with their children, the safety of the children will be paramount.

Requires the secretary of corrections and the secretary of social and health services to review current department policies and assess the adequacy and availability of programs targeted at inmates with children. The secretary shall adopt policies and programs that encourage familial contact and engagement between inmates and their children with the goal of facilitating normal child development, while reducing recidivism and intergenerational incarceration. Programs and policies should take into consideration the children's need to maintain contact with his or her parent and the inmate's ability to develop plans to financially support their children, assist in reunification when appropriate, and encourage the improvement of parenting skills where needed.

Applies to the director of the department of early learning and the superintendent of public instruction also.

Provides that the act shall be null and void if appropriations are not approved.