

DRAFT MINUTES**SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
Meeting Jointly****Monday, November 24, 2014**

The Senate and House Committees on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs met jointly on Monday, November 24, 2014, 10:00 a.m. in Room A of the MAC Building.

Members in Attendance

Committee members in attendance: Senators Eddie Joe Williams, Chair; Jane English, Vice-Chair; and Bobby Pierce. Representatives Andrea Lea, Chair; Nate Bell, Ann Clemmer, Jim Dotson, Kim Hammer, Mary Hickerson, John Hutchison, Allen Kerr, Jim Nickels, Betty Overbey, and Richard Womack.

Other legislators in attendance: Senators Jonathan Dismang, Stephanie Flowers, Jeremy Hutchinson, and Jon Woods. Representatives Scott Baltz, David Branscum, Harold Copenhaver, Jeremy Gillam, Monte Hodges, Douglas House, Sheila Lampkin, Homer Lenderman, Micah Neal, James Ratliff, Sue Scott, Mary Slinkard, Nate Steel, and Tommy Wren. Members-Elect Representatives James Sturch, Charles Blake, and Camille Bennett.

Senator Williams called the meeting to order.

Without objection, the August 18, 2014; October 1, 2014; and the October 20, 2014, meeting minutes were approved. [Exhibit B.1, B.2, and B.3]

Presentation of Prison Overcrowding Study

Mr. Richard Wilson, Assistant Director, Bureau of Legislative Research, presented the “Report on Legislative Hearings associated with Prison Overcrowding in Arkansas.” The report provides a summary of all presentations before the Senate and House Committees on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs from July to October 2014. He stated the Committee met monthly to discuss the prison overcrowding situation in Arkansas and the options available remedy or mitigate the associated problems and costs.

The options reviewed by the Committee are as follows:

- Construct a 1,000 bed maximum-security prison using a 30-year “wrap-around” bond issue funded by an additional \$2 increase on car tag decals;
- Mitigate longer sentences utilizing correctional interventions such as pathway to freedom and other reentry programs;
- Consider using abandoned school buildings and other available structures across the state rather than new construction; enlarge and expand the existing drug court program;
- Consider private corrections management service provider with a lower cost such as LaSalle Corrections;
- Expand the smarter sentencing program; consider funding increase in Arkansas Community Correction (ACC) transitional beds; and
- Review the successes and failures of Act 570 to improve future policy decisions.

To answer Senator Williams question Mr. Mike Carraway, Assistant Director, Administrative Services, Arkansas Department of Correction, stated the 2009 bond will continue to be paid and currently there is approximately four million dollars per year generated from the decal fees.

Ms. Sheila Sharp, Director, Arkansas Community Correction, commented, the intent in the proposed transitional beds on the budget request, during the first six months there would be intensive programming for the inmates but in the last three months before their release, they would be required to get a job and to pay some money back either to help offset the costs or expand the amount of transitional beds. Ms. Sharp mentioned the Act 1190 report will be presented on the next Judiciary meeting. She stated they have 24 recommendations primarily directed at reducing recidivism.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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