

Keisling
Signature of Sponsor

AMEND

House Joint Resolution No. 856*

by deleting all language after the caption and substituting:

WHEREAS, the need for the Tennessee Department of Correction to maintain order in the state prison system is paramount; and

WHEREAS, we support the Department of Correction having discretion to determine effective discipline for inmates; and

WHEREAS, restriction of visitation with family and friends for up to one year is sometimes a necessary form of discipline for inmates; and

WHEREAS, abandonment syndrome is a behavioral or psychological condition that may afflict children due to separation from a parent or the loss of one or both parents; and

WHEREAS, children, with their limited emotional and cognitive resources, may interpret situations as abandonment even if the abandonment was unintentional; and

WHEREAS, abandonment syndrome has an impact on the mental and emotional health of a child; and

WHEREAS, childhood abandonment experiences may lead to trauma if left unaddressed; and

WHEREAS, children with the symptoms of abandonment syndrome may withdraw from social interactions and isolate themselves and may struggle with feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, and some children develop unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as eating disorders; and

WHEREAS, childhood abandonment experiences can lead children to fear abandonment happening again in their adult relationships and can lead to substance abuse; and

WHEREAS, abandonment syndrome can result from both physical abandonment and emotional abandonment; and

WHEREAS, a long restriction on visitation for children who regularly visit an incarcerated parent is difficult for young children to interpret and may create or exacerbate feelings of abandonment in the young child; now, therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize the negative effects of parental incarceration on children and we urge the Tennessee Department of Correction to consider the age of inmates' children along with the frequency with which visitation regularly occurs prior to employing a long restriction on family visitation as a punishment, and to consider a shorter restriction combined with other methods of discipline for those inmates whose children may be subject to the development of abandonment syndrome.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of Correction.