

HOUSE BILL 911

By Wirgau

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4;
Title 8; Title 40 and Title 41, relative to local
correctional facilities.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Comprehensive Local Correctional Enhancement Task Force Act."

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 41, Chapter 51, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) There is created a task force to study best practices and new approaches to the management and coordination of local correctional facilities. The goals of the task force will be to enhance overall operations of the criminal justice system at the local government level, to ensure that taxpayer money invested in local correctional facilities is used wisely and efficiently, to ensure that the rights of individuals involved in local correctional facilities are protected, and to ensure that such individuals are directed or diverted into appropriate programs that will best protect public safety, reduce recidivism, and provide the best likelihood for those individuals to become productive citizens. The task force must examine the challenges raised by individuals dealing with mental illness or substance abuse problems who may become involved with local law enforcement or correctional facilities.

(b) The task force shall be comprised as follows:

(1) The speaker of the senate shall appoint the following members:

(A) Three (3) county sheriffs or jail administrators, one (1) each representing urban, suburban, and rural counties;

(B) The chair of the state and local government committee of the senate;

(C) The chair of the corrections subcommittee of the senate state and local government committee;

(D) One (1) district attorney general;

(E) One (1) general sessions judge;

(F) Three (3) members of the public who have experience or interest in civil rights, criminal justice, and victims' rights;

(2) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint the following members:

(A) Three (3) county mayors or executives, one (1) each representing urban, suburban, and rural counties;

(B) The chair of the local government committee of the house of representatives;

(C) The chair of the state government committee of the house of representatives;

(D) One (1) public defender;

(E) One (1) circuit court judge; and

(F) Three (3) members of the public who have experience or interest in mental health, substance abuse, and re-entry or rehabilitation programs; and

(3) The following persons shall serve as ex officio members:

(A) The commissioner of correction;

(B) The commissioner of finance and administration;

(C) The commissioner of mental health and substance abuse services;

(D) The commissioner of labor and workforce development;

(E) The administrative director of the administrative office of the courts; and

(F) The comptroller of the treasury.

(c) The longest serving legislative member of the task force shall call the first meeting of the task force, at which time the task force shall elect a chair. All members of the task force shall serve as such without compensation, but each member is entitled to reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official duties in accordance with the state comprehensive travel regulations as promulgated by the commissioner of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter. The task force shall be administratively attached to the comptroller of the treasury's office.

(d) The task force shall study the implementation of new approaches to the administration of local correctional programs and facilities with regard to the following goals:

(1) The protection of the public by reducing crime and recidivism by achieving the appropriate balance of prevention, community programs, education, incarceration, and rehabilitative services;

(2) The management of the population of local jails to reduce overcrowding, liability, and cost of operations, and the coordination of the correctional system between local jails and the department of correction;

(3) The enhancement of communications between state and local officials involved with the criminal justice system and mental health and substance abuse services;

(4) The use of diversion, alternative sentencing, community corrections programs, and emerging technology to reduce the burden on the local correctional system;

(5) The best practices for working with individuals with mental health or substance abuse issues who become involved with local law enforcement or correctional facilities; and

(6) The development of re-entry programs and the elimination of barriers that prevent formerly incarcerated individuals from returning to productive employment.

(e) On or before January 15, 2018, the task force shall provide a recommendation and report for new approaches to the administration of local correctional facilities to the general assembly and the governor. Upon receipt of the recommendation and report by the speakers and governor, the task force shall cease to exist.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.