

SR-85, As Adopted by Senate, September 18, 2007

Senator Kuipers offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 85.

A resolution to request the Governor to issue an Executive Directive requiring interdepartmental agreements and cooperation between the Department of Community Health, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Corrections to coordinate services to inmates in Michigan's prisons.

Whereas, During her State of the State Address on February 6, 2007, Governor Granholm proposed her prison reform and budget plan, which she later revealed included the premature release of up to 6,000 convicted felons into Michigan communities. As the calculated first step of her proposed prison solution, on February 20, 2007, Governor Granholm announced the closure of the Southern Michigan Correctional Facility in Jackson, Michigan; and

Whereas, In response to the Governor's early release plan, the Michigan Senate Subcommittee on Prison Reform and Public Safety was formed on February 22, 2007, and charged with conducting an overall assessment and review of the Michigan Department of Corrections; and

Whereas, On May 29, 2007, after three months of thorough hearings and extensive research, the Subcommittee on Prison Reform and Public Safety announced its findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Those findings disclosed an alarming lack of interdepartment cooperation between various state departments providing services to inmates in Michigan prisons. This has resulted in waste, mismanagement, and inefficiency by the Michigan Department of Corrections and a failure of the Governor's departments to provide many prisoners with the resources and support services they need to make a smooth transition back into the community. Among the resources and services found lacking by the Subcommittee were the departments' collective failure to coordinate transitional mental health care programming and medication for parolees, which would help prevent an abrupt discontinuation of treatment and a recurrence of mental health symptoms upon release. The Subcommittee also identified inefficiencies in departmental operations that resulted in failure to provide other necessary services, such as: assisting parole-eligible inmates with obtaining personal identification information needed to obtain housing, employment, and a driver's license and to reintegrate into society; and ensuring eligible parolees receive assistance with essential services upon release, securing immediate eligibility in programs and medical coverage; and

Whereas, Without certain essential resources and critical services in place at the time of release, many parolees have an increased likelihood of returning to a life of crime, unnecessarily contributing to Michigan's exceedingly high 50 percent recidivism rate. To ensure parolees' smooth transition back into the community and to avoid the continued waste of limited government resources associated with the current lack of cooperation between the departments, the Subcommittee concluded that the Department of Corrections, the Department of Community Health, and the Department of Human Services need to cooperate and work together to achieve efficiency and reduce costs; and

Whereas, Interdepartmental cooperation is an essential part of necessary cost savings. Streamlining interdepartmental operations would promote better coordination of services to Michigan inmates and reduce recidivism rates; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we request the Governor to issue an Executive Directive requiring interdepartmental agreements between the Department of Corrections, the Department of Community Health, and the Department of Human Services establishing guidelines and requiring interdepartment cooperation, communication, and sharing of resources; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor's office and the directors of the Department of Community Health, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Corrections.