



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 861 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Rick Jones
Committee: Judiciary

(as enrolled)

Date Completed: 3-26-12

RATIONALE

The Corrections Code provides for the Department of Corrections (DOC) to operate the Special Alternative Incarceration (SAI) program. Also known as "boot camp", the SAI program operates as an alternative to incarceration in State prison facilities for individuals who meet specific criteria. Prisoners who participate in the program generally serve 90 days, and State law limits participation to not more than 120 days. Upon successful completion of the SAI program, a prisoner is placed on parole for at least the remainder of his or her minimum sentence. The SAI program is scheduled to expire at the end of the 2011-12 fiscal year, but many people believe that it should be extended indefinitely.

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Corrections Code to eliminate the September 30, 2012, sunset on Section 34a, which provides for the Special Alternative Incarceration program.

MCL 791.234a

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

The SAI program works toward turning around the attitude and behavior of young criminal offenders. Boot camp prisoners serve under a program of intense supervision that promotes discipline and community service. For example, according to testimony before the Senate Judiciary

Committee by a DOC official, work crews from the SAI program have been involved with cleanup efforts after the recent tornado in Dexter. In addition, although the per-day cost of housing a prisoner in the SAI program is higher than the daily cost of housing a person in the prison system's general population, the boot camp program saves money because a prisoner's length of stay is considerably shorter. Also, experience shows that boot camp participants are less likely to reoffend after their release, so they are less likely to return to the prison system.

The sunset for the SAI program has been delayed several times in recent years, and the program is currently scheduled to end on September 30, 2012. By deleting that sunset, the bill would ensure that the State could continue to hold down incarceration costs, and would eliminate the need to revisit the program every year or two.

Legislative Analyst: Patrick Affholter

FISCAL IMPACT

By removing the sunset on the authorization of the Special Alternative Incarceration program, the bill would maintain the fiscal status quo. If the sunset is not removed and a similar program is not maintained, the State may incur additional incarceration costs, described below.

The SAI program has a current per-offender per-day cost of approximately \$94, while traditional Level I incarceration costs average approximately \$65. However, as SAI participants are in a diversion program

for targeted offenders, they typically are housed for only 90 days, which means that the overall cost to send an individual to SAI is approximately \$8,460. Comparatively, an offender serving a traditional prison sentence will be housed for 12 months or more, meaning that the overall cost will be at least \$23,725.

Therefore, for each person diverted to SAI instead of being sentenced to traditional incarceration, the State avoids approximately \$15,265 in incarceration costs. The SAI facility houses up to 400 offenders at once, and therefore is able to house up to 1,600 offenders per year (each for a 90-day stay). Of the 1,600 offenders, approximately 90% will actually complete the program, which means that SAI diverts approximately 1,440 offenders per year at savings of \$15,265. (Those who do not complete must serve their traditional sentence instead.) Thus, in the absence of the SAI program, the State could incur additional incarceration costs of nearly \$22.0 million per year.

Fiscal Analyst: Dan O'Connor

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.