



Senate Fiscal Agency
P. O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

BILL ANALYSIS



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986
TDD: (517) 373-0543

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

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Corrections Code to eliminate the sunset on the Special Alternative Incarceration (SAI) program.

Section 34a of the Code provides for the operation of the 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.

Section 34a is scheduled to be repealed effective September 30, 2012. The bill would delete that sunset provision.

MCL 791.234a

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.

Date Completed: 3-20-12

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.