



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 776

January Session, 2019

House Bill No. 6714

House of Representatives, April 25, 2019

The Committee on Judiciary reported through REP. STAFSTROM of the 129th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE COST OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2019*) The Commissioner of
2 Correction shall provide telephone service to persons who are in the
3 custody of the commissioner and confined in a correctional facility.
4 The commissioner may supplement such telephone service with any
5 other telecommunications service, including, but not limited to, video
6 communication and electronic mail services. To the extent that the
7 commissioner provides any such service, each such service shall be
8 provided free of charge to such persons and any communication,
9 whether initiated or received through any such service, shall be free of
10 charge to the person initiating or receiving the communication. The
11 Department of Correction shall not receive revenue for the provision of
12 telephone service or any other telecommunications service to any
13 person in the custody of the commissioner and confined in a
14 correctional facility. The commissioner shall not limit or replace in-

15 person visits to any such person based on the provision of telephone
16 service or any other telecommunications service.

17 Sec. 2. Sections 18-81s, 18-81x and 54-105a of the general statutes are
18 repealed. (*Effective October 1, 2019*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2019</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2019</i>	Repealer section

JUD *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 20 \$	FY 21 \$
Correction, Dept.	GF - Cost	5 to 6 million	5 to 6 million
Correction, Dept.; Judicial Dept.; Admin. Serv., Dept.	Technical Services Revolving Fund - Revenue Loss	7.7 million	7.7 million
Correction, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires the Department of Correction (DOC) to provide telephone services for inmates free of charge and results in various costs and revenue losses to the state. Currently, inmates pay for each call and a portion of that money compensates the vendor for providing the service and the remainder goes to the state to fund various programs.

Cost Impact:

- It will cost DOC approximately \$5 - \$6 million to compensate the vendor for the telephone services. The exact cost will depend on the inmate call volume which could potentially increase due to the fees being removed and the inmate population which has been decreasing in recent years.
- There is a potential cost to the extent the Commissioner of

DOC adds video communication and electronic mail services for inmates because the bill dictates that these services shall be free of charge.

Revenue Impact:

- The bill results in an approximate \$7.7 million revenue loss to the state. This money goes to DOC for expanding inmate educational services and reentry program initiatives, and the remainder pays for criminal justice information system (in DAS) and for probation staffing in the Judicial Department.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation and the number of telephone calls.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 6714*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE COST OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Correction (DOC) to provide telephone services for inmates in correctional facilities and also allows the commissioner to supplement the phone service with other telecommunications services, including video communication and e-mail services. The commissioner cannot limit or replace in-person visits to the inmate based on provision of these services. The bill prohibits DOC from receiving revenue for phone or telecommunications service to any inmate. To the extent that the commissioner provides any such service, it must be free of charge to the inmates and the person initiating or receiving the communication.

The bill also repeals:

1. laws requiring the Department of Administrative Services to transfer some of the revenue derived from inmate phone calls to (a) the judicial department for probation transition program and technical violation unit staff and services and (b) DOC to expand inmate educational services and re-entry initiatives and
2. an obsolete law requiring DOC to establish a debit account telephone system pilot program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 24 Nay 15 (04/09/2019)