
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 972 (File 453, as amended by Senate "A")*

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

SUMMARY

Starting October 1, 2022, this bill requires the Department of Correction (DOC) and the judicial branch's Court Support Services Division (CSSD) to, respectively, provide telephone services for inmates in correctional facilities and children detained in a juvenile detention facility (see BACKGROUND).

The bill allows the commissioner and CSSD executive director to supplement phone services with other telecommunications services, including video communication and email. Any communication service the commissioner and executive director provide must be free of charge to the inmates or children and to the people who initiate or receive the communication.

The bill prohibits (1) the DOC commissioner and executive director from supplanting in-person contact visits with phone or other communication services and (2) the state from receiving revenue for these phone or telecommunications services on and after October 1, 2022.

The bill also repeals the laws requiring the Department of Administrative Services to transfer some of the revenue derived from inmate phone calls to:

1. the Judicial Department for probation transition program and technical violation unit staff and services and
2. DOC to expand inmate educational services and re-entry initiatives.

*Senate Amendment "A" adds the provisions regarding children detained in a juvenile facility.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the repealer section is effective on October 1, 2022.

BACKGROUND

Child

By law, a child is generally anyone under age 18 who is not legally emancipated, but for delinquency matters and proceedings the definition includes a person who:

1. was at least age 7 when he or she committed the alleged delinquent act and is (a) under age 18 and not legally emancipated or (b) age 18 or older but committed the act when under age 18 or
2. is over 18 and (a) violates a court order or probation condition related to a delinquency proceeding or (b) willfully fails to appear in response to a summons or at any other delinquency proceeding for which he or she received notice (CGS § 46b-120).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 24 Nay 13 (03/29/2021)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 46 Nay 2 (05/03/2021)