
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: AB 683 **Hearing Date:** June 13, 2017
Author: Eduardo Garcia
Version: April 17, 2017
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** No
Consultant: NG

Subject: *Prisoners: Support Services*

HISTORY

Source: National Compadres Network

Prior Legislation: AB 2114 (Eduardo Garcia) Held in Assembly Committee on Appropriations
AB 900 (Solorio) Chapter 7, Statutes of 2007

Support: Boys and Girls Club of Coachella Valley; California Catholic Conference; California Public Defenders Association; Californians for Safety and Justice; City of Coachella; Latino Commission Counseling Center; Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

Opposition: None known

Assembly Floor Vote: 72 - 0

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bill is to authorize the counties of Alameda, Imperial, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, and San Joaquin to implement reentry pilot programs for inmates during or after their incarceration in a county jail.

Existing law allows the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to operate pilot programs that affect inmates. (Pen. Code §5058.1)

Existing law requires the California Rehabilitation Oversight Board to examine the effectiveness of various rehabilitation programs operated by CDCR. (Pen. Code §6141)

Existing law requires CDCR to contract with a private nonprofit agency or agencies to establish and operate a visitor center outside each state adult prison in California which has a population of more than 300 inmates. (Pen. Code §6351)

Existing law requires each visitor center to provide, at a minimum, all of the following services:

- Assistance to visitors with transportation between public transit terminals and prisons;
- Child care for visitors' children;
- Emergency clothing;

- Information on visiting regulations and processes;
- Referral to other agencies and services;
- A sheltered area, which is outside of the security perimeter, for visitors who are waiting before or after visits.

This bill declares that studies have consistently found that prisoners who maintain close contact with their family members while incarcerated have better post-release outcomes and lower recidivism rates, and that, despite this, correction officials are often obstinate in support this communication with respect to written correspondence, visitation, and phone calls.

This bill declares that revising visitation policies to facilitate visits by family members, investing in prison-based literacy programs and less restrictive mail policies, and reducing intrastate prison and jail phone rates would provide prisoners with greater opportunities to maintain close relationships with their families.

This bill declares that research demonstrates positive fatherhood involvement improves life trajectory for a child. Also, fatherhood involvement in a child's life protects against risk factors that pose harm to children, such as problematic behavior, maternal depression, and family economic hardship. Fatherhood involvement is also associated with promoting children's social and language skills.

This bill declares specific examples of culturally relevant approaches to parenting, fatherhood support, and young male mentorship.

This bill declares legislative intent as the following:

- To enact legislation that creates culturally competent programs that increase opportunities for family friendly contact during and after imprisonment;
- To enact legislation that creates culturally competent programmatic support services and reentry strategies outside of imprisonment that support fatherhood involvement, family reunification, and family strengthening;
- To enact legislation that supports innovation on culturally relevant parenting, fatherhood support, and young male mentorship to decrease the risk of violence, suicide, and other traumas that children of prisoners who are under 17 years of age may be exposed to by providing education, skills-based training, and early intervention and treatment referrals to parents, families, and children.

This bill allows the Counties of Alameda, Imperial, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Clara, and San Joaquin to implement a pilot program to provide reentry services and support to persons who are, or who are scheduled to be, released from a county jail.

This bill requires that each pilot program established pursuant to this section to include, at a minimum, all of the following components:

- Support services for recipients who are parents;
- A mentorship program that employs a culturally relevant, population-specific approach that has been employed by nonprofit organizations, such as the National Compadres Network and the Brotherhood of Elders;
- The establishment of a collaborative body of training and technical advisers;

- The establishment of a Youth Advisory Council to help inform and guide program leaders;
- Leadership opportunities, particularly for youth;
- Services to address mental health issues, including mental health issues relating to sexual exploitation, racial and ethnic disparities, and trauma;
- An advisory committee in each county to oversee the establishment and implementation of the pilot program in the county;
- Each service provider has a proven track record of providing meaningful, culturally based programming, including the support of gender specific and gender fluid approaches;
- Each service provider offers services that support culturally based family strengthening, character development, and community mobilization;
- Each service provider offers services before and after the recipient's release from a county jail.

This bill requires that each county that elects to implement a pilot program shall conduct a study and submit a report to the Legislature on or before January 1, 2023 that includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of the pilot programs.

COMMENTS

1. Need for This Bill

According to the author:

As of March 2015, the California prison population stood at 112,300. Less than two thirds of California's adult male population is nonwhite or Latino (60 percent), but these groups make up three of every four men in prison: Latinos are 42 percent, Blacks are 29 percent, and other races are 6 percent. Among adult men in 2013, Blacks were incarcerated at a rate of 4,367 per 100,000, compared to 922 for Latinos, 488 for non-Latino whites, and 34 for Asians.

About half of men in prison are fathers of minor children and 42 percent of fathers lived with their children at the time of their arrest.

Incarceration of fathers destabilizes and harms their families in many ways. Two-thirds of incarcerated parents are nonviolent offenders; however, contact between them and their families [are] severely restricted and there are very few policies in place that protect and advocate for the rights of their children. Children with incarcerated parents are three times more likely to suffer from developmental or behavioral problems, along with mental health problems such as depression.

AB 683 seeks to address the social and systemic barriers that incarcerated and previously incarcerated men and woman face through facilitating healthy relationships with their families.

Addressing the barriers faced by re-entry from prison not only supports the well-being of the individual and their families but also the strengthening of their communities.

2. Effect of This Bill

This bill allows specified counties to create pilot programs designed to provide reentry services for inmates. The reentry programs of this bill aim to provide culturally relevant, population-specific approaches in the services they wish to provide. This bill specifies minimum standards to be met by each pilot program.

This bill also requires, on or before January 1, 2023, the counties that elect to implement a pilot program must conduct a study and report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of the pilot program.

3. Current Reentry Programs

According to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC):

The Corrections Planning and Grants Programs (CPGP) Division develops, administers, and evaluates state and federally funded grant programs and plans designed to improve the effectiveness of state and local correctional systems, reduce costs, maximize resources and enhance public safety...

California State Budget Act of 2014 and 2015 allocated funding to counties to develop a local competitive grant program intended to fund community recidivism and crime reduction services, including delinquency prevention, homelessness prevention, and reentry services. The amounts each county receives is set in statute. Direct allocation from State Controller to counties - \$8,000,000 in FY 2014-15 and \$4,000,000 in FY 2015-16...

California State Budget Act – subject to an annual appropriation – supports community-based parenting services to young parents between the ages of 14 and 25 who are involved in the juvenile or criminal justice system to break the inter-generational cycle of violence and delinquency. \$835,000 annually to seven projects (county probation departments) for three years. Current grant cycle ends June 30, 2018...

In FY 11/12 and FY 12/13, the BSCC distributed funding allocated from the California State Budget Act to assist county Community Corrections Partnerships (CCPs) with the development of implementation plans for realignment. Beginning in fiscal year 2013, counties only receive these funds if they complete and submit a report on the implementation of their plans in a format prescribed by the BSCC- \$7,900,000 to 58 counties.¹

¹ Linda M. Penner, Chair, "Corrections Planning and Grants Programs Divisions Grant Administration Overview March 2017," Board of State and Community Corrections, March 2017, accessed June 1, 2017. <http://www.bscc.ca.gov/downloads/2017-3%20CPGP%20grant%20overview.pdf>

4. Argument in Support

According to the Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability:

AB 683 supports and creates culturally competent programs that increase opportunities for family friendly contact during and after imprisonment. AB 683 helps establish programs that will help mitigate the social and mental barriers inmates suffer during and after imprisonment. Through the availability of these programs they will be able to have an easier transition to society and thus have a higher chance of success.

- END -