

HOUSE BILL 787

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4r2733
CF 4r2296

By: **Delegates Summers, Carter, Oaks, and Swain**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2014

Assigned to: Judiciary

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Corrections – Isolated Confinement Study**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Special Joint Commission on Public Safety and
4 Security in State and Local Correctional Facilities to appoint an independent
5 third party to conduct a certain review of correctional facilities relating to
6 isolated confinement; requiring a correctional facility to provide access to all
7 data necessary for the review to the independent third party; requiring the
8 independent third party to develop certain recommendations; requiring the
9 independent third party to submit an initial report on its findings and
10 recommendations for a certain period to the Governor and the Special Joint
11 Commission on or before a certain date; requiring the independent third party
12 to submit follow-up reports on or before a certain date for a certain period of
13 time; defining certain terms; providing for the termination of this Act; and
14 generally relating to studying isolated confinement in correctional facilities.

15 Preamble

16 WHEREAS, The rate of isolated confinement in Maryland is approximately
17 8.5%, which is significantly higher than most other states; and

18 WHEREAS, A number of psychological experts and studies have demonstrated
19 the profoundly deleterious effect on mental functioning associated with long-term
20 isolated confinement caused by both the isolation and the severe restriction of
21 environmental and social stimulation associated with it; and

22 WHEREAS, The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture has defined
23 long-term confinement as 14 days or more; and

24 WHEREAS, Juveniles and those with serious mental illness are particularly
25 vulnerable to the adverse psychological impact of isolated confinement, with cases
26 resulting in self-mutilation and suicide, and United Nations treaties and conventions

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 have consistently mandated that isolated confinement not be used on these vulnerable
2 populations; and

3 WHEREAS, A number of states, including Maine, Mississippi, and Washington,
4 have reduced their use of long-term isolated confinement by using alternative
5 strategies and other best practices; and

6 WHEREAS, Reductions in the use of long-term isolated confinement have been
7 shown to reduce overall prison violence and costs; and

8 WHEREAS, In the 2012 U.S. Senate hearing on federal use of isolated
9 confinement, the American Bar Association (ABA) submitted testimony that isolated
10 confinement should “be imposed in the most limited manner possible” and the ABA
11 further advocated for an “investigation as to how the use of long-term solitary
12 confinement may be restricted so as to promote the safe, efficient, and humane
13 operation of prisons”; and

14 WHEREAS, While Maryland’s overall rate of use for isolated confinement is
15 high, additional information is needed to better understand the landscape and the best
16 approaches for reducing the usage rate; now, therefore,

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
18 MARYLAND, That:

19 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

20 (2) “Correctional facility” means:

21 (i) a facility operated by or under contract with the Maryland
22 Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services;

23 (ii) a facility operated by a local government for the confinement
24 of a person arrested for, charged with, or convicted of a criminal offense; or

25 (iii) a public or private juvenile secure detention facility,
26 including a facility operated by the Department of Juvenile Services.

27 (3) (i) “Isolated confinement” means prolonged cell confinement of
28 22 hours or more per day with limited out-of-cell time and severely restricted activity,
29 movement, and social interaction, whether pursuant to disciplinary, administrative, or
30 classification action.

31 (ii) “Isolated confinement” includes:

32 1. housing referred to as “disciplinary segregation”,
33 “administrative segregation”, “special housing”, or “super-maximum security
34 housing”; and

1 D. a severe personality disorder that is manifested by
2 frequent episodes of psychosis or depression and results in significant functional
3 impairment;

4 E. mental retardation with significant functional
5 impairment; or

6 F. a traumatic brain injury.

7 (b) (1) The Special Joint Commission on Public Safety and Security in
8 State and Local Correctional Facilities shall appoint an independent third party to
9 conduct a review of correctional facilities in the State regarding the facilities' use of
10 isolated confinement.

11 (2) The review conducted under this subsection shall include:

12 (i) interviews of inmates and correctional staff, if necessary;
13 and

14 (ii) a review of:

15 1. the conditions for inmates in isolated confinement;
16 and

17 2. the frequency of the facility's usage of isolated
18 confinement.

19 (c) A correctional facility shall provide access to all data necessary for the
20 independent third party to conduct its review to the independent third party
21 appointed under subsection (b) of this section.

22 (d) The independent third party shall develop recommendations on:

23 (1) ways to reduce the use of isolated confinement in correctional
24 facilities;

25 (2) improving conditions for inmates in isolated confinement; and

26 (3) diverting juveniles and persons with serious mental illness from
27 isolated confinement.

28 (e) (1) On or before June 1, 2017, the independent third party shall
29 submit an initial report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in
30 accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, the Special Joint
31 Commission on Public Safety and Security in State and Local Correctional Facilities.

1 (2) The initial report submitted under paragraph (1) of this subsection
2 shall review the period between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2016.

3 (f) On or before June 1 of 2018, 2019, and 2020, the independent third party
4 shall submit follow-up reports reviewing calendar years 2017, 2018, and 2019,
5 respectively, and providing the independent third party's findings and
6 recommendations for each year to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of
7 the State Government Article, the Special Joint Commission on Public Safety and
8 Security in State and Local Correctional Facilities.

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
10 October 1, 2014. It shall remain effective for a period of 7 years and, at the end of
11 September 30, 2021, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act
12 shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.