



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

Office of Government & Legislative Affairs

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BILL: HOUSE BILL 415

POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION: House Bill 415 establishes the Family Literacy Pilot Program administered by the State Library Agency in consultation with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Correctional Education Council to enable incarcerated individuals to read aloud to their children by preparing a recording; and to require the State Library Agency to submit a report relating to the Family Literacy Pilot Program.

COMMENTS:

- The Department prioritizes public safety and wellness in an effort to reduce recidivism and ensure incarcerated individuals become successful, self-sufficient contributors in their communities upon release. To accomplish this, the Department focuses on a holistic approach to encourage incarcerated individuals to utilize rehabilitative and educational services behind the walls and beyond.
- DPSCS supports and embraces family, friends, and loved ones of those who are incarcerated to maintain contact. DPSCS encourages incarcerated individuals to communicate with family, friends, and loved ones with minimum interference and consistent with the safety and security needs of the facility.
- The Department supports the Family Literacy program established under this bill and just recently held an annual book reading event at the Western Correctional Institution where incarcerated individuals selected books to read to their children.
- This event is part of a larger initiative to foster family connections and promote literacy among incarcerated individuals and their loved ones. The participants recorded themselves reading the books and sent loving messages to their families. Afterwards, the book is sent

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to the child where they can read the book with their loved one or finish it on their own, helping to maintain vital connections through reading.

- The Department anticipates an operational and fiscal impact for program coordination within the correctional facilities, including security measures which will vary depending on the number of participants.

CONCLUSION: For these reasons, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests this Committee vote **FAVORABLY** on House Bill 415.