



BETTER JUSTICE FOR FLORIDA

Sending Elderly Inmates Home with Supervision

Background

Florida faces an expensive trend: the aging of its prison population. The Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) projects that the population of incarcerated persons older than 50 will grow by 4,860 by mid-2021, bringing the estimated total to approximately 26,700. In contrast, the under-50 prison population is expected to grow by 1,080. This rise in the number of older people in prison will impose huge and unsustainable fiscal burdens on Florida taxpayers.

This senior incarcerated population is more expensive due to increased health care needs and housing considerations. According to the National Institute of Corrections, prisoners older than 50 cost as much as three times what younger people cost, mostly due to health care. A 2012 ACLU report estimated it costs \$70,000 to house a senior prisoner. While medical care is a key factor, Florida corrections officials separate elderly prisoners from the rest of the population to prevent abuse from younger, more aggressive prisoners. As the elderly population increases, FDC will likely require new appropriate housing apart from the rest of the prison population. This will come at great expense to the Florida taxpayer.

FDC reports 37% of Florida's elderly inmates are serving time for nonviolent offenses.

Proposed Legislation

HB 535 / SB 606: Aged Prison Inmates

Filed by Rep. Edwards and Sen. Clemens

Summary

These bills would require the Assistant Secretary for Health Services to create health care standards for incarcerated people older than 50 and would create a conditional elderly release program. Among other criteria for this program, qualifying people must be:

- 65 or older
- Convicted of a felony and have served at least 50 percent of his or her sentence
- Ineligible for parole or conditional medical release

Additionally, qualified people must have:

- No more than two prior felony convictions, neither of which are:
 - A violent first degree felony
 - A capital offense
 - A sexual offense
 - An offense involving a child
- A record of good behavior and have not received a disciplinary report within six months.

Other criteria include that the person:

- Not currently be sentenced for:
 - A violent first degree felony
 - A capital offense
 - A sexual offense
 - An offense involving a child.

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General requests can be made at contact@betterjusticefl.com

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