

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Criminal Justice

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BILL: CS/SB 226

INTRODUCER: Criminal Justice Committee and Senator Bracy

SUBJECT: Inmate Reentry Services

DATE: October 11, 2017      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Jones	Jones	CJ	<b>Fav/CS</b>
2.			ACJ	
3.			AP	

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**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**  
COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

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**I. Summary:**

CS/SB 226 amends s. 944.705, F.S., to specify that the release orientation program consist of at least 200 hours of instruction time and begin at least 360 days prior to the inmate’s release. The bill also adds to the instruction topics of the release orientation and increases the comprehensive transition course from 100 hours to at least 200 hours.

The bill requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to assist inmates in securing the identified basic support services and notify every inmate of opportunities for industry certifications and job placement in the community in which the inmate will be released.

The DOC must provide a written report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the opportunities currently available for inmates to receive industry certifications and vocational training and make recommendations for improvement in these areas. The report is due to the Governor and the Legislature by October 1, 2018. This portion of the bill is effective upon becoming law.

The fiscal impact of the bill is indeterminate. Please see Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

Except as otherwise provided, the bill is effective October 1, 2018.

## II. Present Situation:

The Department of Corrections (DOC) begins the reentry process 240 days prior to an inmate's release. Release officers and health service providers assess the inmate's post-release needs and develop a release plan. The release plan is individualized for each inmate and includes community referrals specific to his or her needs.<sup>1</sup>

The DOC also maintains a website with a reentry resource directory. The directory is searchable and contains over 6,000 community, state, and local organizations that provide transition services to ex-offenders. The DOC routinely verifies these resources and accepts applications from interested organizations to be included in the directory.<sup>2</sup>

Section 944.705, F.S., requires the DOC to provide a standardized release orientation program to every eligible inmate. The program instruction must include:

- Employment skills.
- Money management skills.
- Personal development and planning.
- Special needs.
- Community reentry concerns.
- Community reentry support.
- Any other appropriate instruction to ensure the inmate's successful reentry into the community.

The DOC must also conduct a needs assessment of every inmate to determine what basic support services an inmate needs after release.

Section 944.7065, F.S., requires each inmate complete a comprehensive transition course before release. The 100-hour course covers job readiness and life management skills.

## III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 944.705, F.S., to specify that the release orientation program consist of at least 200 hours of instruction time and begin at least 360 days prior to the inmate's release. The instruction topics of the release orientation program are amended to include housing placement information and job search assistance.

The DOC must assist inmates in securing any identified basic support services and notify every inmate of opportunities for industry certifications and job placement in the community in which the inmate will be released.

The bill amends s. 944.7065, F.S., to increase the comprehensive transition course from 100 hours to at least 200 hours.

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<sup>1</sup> Florida Department of Corrections, *FDC – Background Information on Re-Entry Programming and Transitional Services*, p. 1, (on file with the Senate Criminal Justice Committee).

<sup>2</sup> 2018 Florida Department of Corrections Bill Analysis, *SB 226*, p. 2, October 2, 2017, (on file with the Senate Criminal Justice Committee).

The bill specifies that the Legislature finds an essential part of reentry services and reducing recidivism is providing all inmates with the opportunity to obtain industry certifications and vocational training. The DOC must provide a written report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on the opportunities currently available for inmates to receive industry certifications and vocational training and make recommendations for improvement in these areas. The report is due to the Governor and the Legislature by October 1, 2018. This section of the bill is effective upon becoming law.

Except as otherwise provided, the bill is effective October 1, 2018.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

#### **V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill requires instruction time for the release orientation program be at least 200 hours and the program must begin 360 days before an inmate's release. The comprehensive transition course is increased from a 100-hour course to at least a 200-hour course. The fiscal impact of these changes on the DOC are indeterminate.

The DOC must report back to the Governor and the Legislature on the current opportunities available for inmates to receive industry certifications and vocational training and make recommendations for improvement in these areas. The fiscal impact of this report can likely be absorbed within existing resources at the DOC.

#### **VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 944.705 and 944.7065.

**IX. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS by Criminal Justice on October 9, 2017:**

The Committee Substitute requires:

- The release orientation program and comprehensive transition course for inmates consist of at least 200 hours of instruction time;
- The release orientation program to begin at least 360 days prior to the inmates release;
- Housing placement and job search assistance information to be part of the release orientation program instruction;
- The DOC to notify every inmate of opportunities for industry certifications and job placement in the inmate's release community; and
- The DOC to report on the opportunities currently available for inmates to receive industry certifications and vocational training and make recommendations on improvement.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.