

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1934

As Reported By House Committee On:
Criminal Justice & Corrections

Title: An act relating to deductions from inmate funds.

Brief Description: Specifying deductions from inmate funds.

Sponsors: Representatives Koster, Ballasiotes, Hickel, Robertson, Mitchell, Dickerson, Cairnes, Regala, Delvin, Dunn and Blalock.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 2/25/97, 2/26/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Ballasiotes, Chairman; Benson, Vice Chairman; Koster, Vice Chairman; O'Brien, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blalock; Cairnes; Delvin; Dickerson; Hickel; Mitchell; Robertson and Sullivan.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background: The Department of Corrections (DOC) is responsible for establishing deductions to be made from an inmate's wages to contribute to the cost of incarceration and the development of the Correctional Industries program. For example, a 35 percent deduction is withdrawn from the wages of inmates participating in a class I Correctional Industry program (private sector businesses operated in the DOC). The deduction is then distributed as follows:

5 percent to the Crime Victims' Compensation program;
10 percent to the inmate's savings account;
20 percent to the cost of the inmate's incarceration.

All money received by an inmate from outside of the prison is subject to the same mandatory deductions as class I industry wages.

Summary of Bill: The mandatory deduction on all money received by an inmate from outside of the prison is reduced from 35 percent to 15 percent:

5 percent to the Crime Victims' Compensation program;
10 percent to the inmate's savings account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 19, 1997.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: It does not seem fair to charge inmates for their incarceration since most of the jobs for inmates within the prisons are somewhat limited. In addition, since the average citizen is already paying for inmate incarceration through their public taxes, the charging of inmates for their incarceration is seen by some as a form of double taxation. Many of the inmates are also from impoverished families and as a result much of the funds that they do receive is used to pay for personal hygiene items which can cost an inmate an average of \$30 a month.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative John Koster, prime sponsor (pro); Jack Roos, corrections volunteer (pro); Niko Colella, Catholic Detention Ministry (pro); Kathleen Russell, Washington Association of Churches (pro); and Kevin Glackin-Coley, Catholic Detention Ministry (pro).