

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5542

As Reported By House Committee On:
Criminal Justice & Corrections

Title: An act relating to the alien offender camp.

Brief Description: Repealing the alien offender camp.

Sponsors: Senators Long, Hargrove, Schow and Kohl; by request of Department of Corrections.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 4/1/97, 4/2/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Ballasiotes, Chairman; Benson, Vice Chairman; Koster, Vice Chairman; O'Brien, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blalock; Cairnes; Dickerson; Hickel and Mitchell.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Delvin; Robertson and Sullivan.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background: In 1995, the Legislature authorized the Department of Corrections (DOC) to establish an illegal alien offender camp (HB 2010). The legislation further required the DOC to be ready to assign offenders to the camp not later than January 1, 1997.

The Alien Offender Camp had to meet the following goals:

1. expedite deportation;
2. reduce daily costs of incarceration;
3. enhance public benefit through work programs and exemption from education programs;
4. minimal access to privileges; and
5. maximize use of non-state resources.

In preparation for the implementation of the illegal alien offender camp, the DOC was directed to prepare a report identifying legal and fiscal issues needing further legislative action before the camp could be implemented. The DOC's implementation plan had to address

1. eligibility criteria for prompt admission;
2. minimum/maximum length of the camp;
3. operational elements;
4. mitigation of adverse impact on other offender programs; and
5. meeting the goals of the camp and any state fiscal issues.

As a result of the report, a bill was introduced to the 1996 Legislature specifying the eligibility criteria, selection process, programming, and other operational details that needed further legislative action prior to implementation. The bill, HB 2711 (1996), did not pass the Legislature.

Summary of Bill: The obligation for the DOC to establish an illegal alien offender camp and be ready to assign offenders to the camp by January 1, 1997, is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Although legislation to fund the alien offender camp was introduced in January 1996, the legislation was never passed and, consequently, the camp was not funded. Thus, the camp did not open in January 1997 as authorized. This provision in law should be repealed for two reasons: (1) there are operational problems in establishing an alien offender camp; and (2) the anticipated savings are not expected to materialize.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Long, prime sponsor.