

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5025

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services, January 26, 2023

Title: An act relating to implementation of technology systems at the department of corrections.

Brief Description: Concerning implementation of technology systems at the department of corrections.

Sponsors: Senators Dozier, Boehnke, Gildon, Padden, Wagoner and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services: 1/19/23, 1/26/23 [DP-WM].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to use a competitive request for proposal process to replace the Offender Management Network Information data system.
- Requires DOC to implement an electronic health records system that can communicate with data systems used by managed care systems for purposes of care coordination.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wilson, C., Chair; Kauffman, Vice Chair; Boehnke, Ranking Member; Frame, Nguyen, Warnick and Wilson, J.

Staff: Kelsey-anne Fung (786-7479)

Background: Offender Management Network Information System. The Offender Management Network Information (OMNI) system was custom developed for the state in

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1998 through contracts with IBM and Sierra Systems. The first phase was put into production in March 2003 and the final phases went live in 2008. Five other systems, together with OMNI, support the full scope of the offender management functions at the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC). There are 17 common functional areas for corrections management systems, which among others includes sentence calculation, classification, caseload management, security, discipline, health care, programs, release and discharge, and community supervision. DOC's OMNI system covers 13 of the 17 functional areas and uses additional systems that perform the other functions that interoperate with OMNI.

Sentence Calculation Function. The sentence calculation function of OMNI is where DOC enters court commitments and calculates when the inmate will be eligible for release. The sentence calculation function also automatically recalculates release dates when an inmate's rate of earned time changes or after a gain or loss of good behavior credits. It determines programming eligibility based on offense, sentence, and time to serve factors, and enforces court orders such as restitution payments and victim notification. OMNI produces invalid results, requiring a team of DOC records staff to hand calculate and verify each change in sentence to prevent unintentional early release of or extended time for incarcerated individuals. The system is difficult to modify and slow to respond to new requirements and changes in legislation.

DOC completed feasibility studies in 2020 and 2021. The first evaluated and identified viable alternatives for potentially replacing OMNI. The second focused on whether DOC should replace or modernize only the sentence calculation function of OMNI as the first phase of replacing OMNI. Funding was provided in the 2022 supplemental budget for a commercial off-the-shelf software solution to update the sentencing calculation module of OMNI.

Early Release Due to System Error. In December 2015, the state and public learned that, due to a misinterpretation of the requirements in OMNI's sentence calculation functionality, nearly 3200 convicted felons had been released too early over the course of 13 years, and that at least two of these individuals had committed violent crimes while released resulting in the death of two individuals. The defect was due to incorrect requirements coded into the Offender Based Tracking System (OBTS), OMNI's predecessor, in 2003 after a Washington Supreme Court ruling required DOC to apply good time credits earned in a county jail to state prison sentences. DOC changed its sentence computation coding to comply with the ruling, however, the programming fix contained an inaccurate sequencing that over-credited good time for those with sentencing enhancements. The calculation error was carried forward from OBTS into OMNI when the function was replicated in OMNI's software. The fix to OMNI was implemented in January 2016. Of those released early, 116 were required to return to prison due to subsequent crimes or parole violations committed after their release. At least 60 of the early released incarcerated individuals were returned to custody.

Electronic Health Records. DOC currently uses a predominantly paper medical records system. Per DOC, the incarcerated population is highly mobile with individuals often being transferred between several facilities during their incarceration. Physical medical charts and files must be stored, transported between facilities, and pulled and delivered daily for provider appointments. Despite the extensive movement, paper medical records must be managed to ensure the safe keeping of protected health information. Maintaining continuity of care presents a challenge for DOC Health Services.

In 2013, DOC completed a feasibility study to outline system specification and business requirements needed to implement an electronic health record (EHR) system. DOC completed a request for information process, submitted a December 2020 report to the Governor and Legislature outlining basic system specifications, and recommended next steps necessary for implementation of EHR. According to this report, an EHR system would improve health care delivery, improve accessibility to medical records, provide health care data analytics and informatics, enhance security, produce cost savings and efficiencies, and improve community health and continuity of care for reentry. DOC received funding in the 2022 supplemental budget to continue progress towards EHR, and the request for proposal release is scheduled for January 2023.

Summary of Bill: DOC must use a competitive request for proposal process to replace the OMNI system with a more efficient and technologically advanced system. DOC must leverage existing resources, development plans, and funding.

DOC must also implement a comprehensive electronic health records system that can communicate with information and data systems used by managed care organizations for purposes of care coordination activities.

Appropriation: The bill contains a null and void clause requiring specific funding be provided in an omnibus appropriation act.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The paper medical records system at DOC is not keeping up with the times. When an incarcerated individual needs to be transported to the hospital, they have to bring their paper medical records with them, often in banker boxes, and the hospital has to go through them and transcribe everything on paper records for the individual. In order for individuals to be able to get the right care in a timely manner, DOC needs to have medical records in digital format.

From an education perspective, OMNI is used by education navigators and educational

corrections staff to manage reentry plans, enroll students in classes, and track student progress. The staff are frequently confronted by the limited capabilities of OMNI, which can be time consuming and frustrating. Therefore, having a more efficient electronic management system will enable more collaboration with individuals on the inside and outside to support education and smooth transitions so individuals have the best opportunities to create healthy communities and reduce recidivism.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Perry Dozier, Prime Sponsor; Pat Seibert-Love, SBCTC; Hanan Al-Zubaidy, SBCTC.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.