

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2114

Introduced by Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia

February 17, 2016

An act relating to prisoners.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2114, as introduced, Eduardo Garcia. Prisoners: support services. Existing law requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to contract with a private nonprofit agency or agencies to establish and operate a visitor center outside each state adult prison in California which has a population of more than 300 inmates. Under existing law, those visitor centers are required to provide minimum services to prison visitors, including, among other services, assistance with transportation between public transit terminals and prisons, child care for visitors' children, and referral to other agencies and services.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that supports and creates culturally competent programs that increase opportunities for family friendly contact during and after imprisonment, that funds and creates culturally competent programmatic support services and reentry strategies outside of imprisonment that support fatherhood involvement, family reunification, and family strengthening, and that supports expanded funding for innovation on culturally relevant parenting, fatherhood support, and young male mentorship. The bill would make related legislative findings and declarations.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (1) Studies have consistently found that prisoners who maintain
4 close contact with their family members while incarcerated have
5 better postrelease outcomes and lower recidivism rates. Despite
6 this, corrections officials are often obstinate in supporting this
7 communication with respect to written correspondence, visitation,
8 and phone calls.

9 (2) Revising visitation policies to facilitate visits by family
10 members, investing in prison-based literacy programs and less
11 restrictive mail policies, and reducing intrastate prison and jail
12 phone rates would provide prisoners with greater opportunities to
13 maintain close relationships with their families.

14 (3) Research cites that positive fatherhood involvement improves
15 life trajectory for a child. Also, fatherhood involvement in a child's
16 life protects against risk factors that pose harm to children, such
17 as problematic behavior, maternal depression, and family economic
18 hardship. Fatherhood involvement is also associated with
19 promoting children's social and language skills.

20 (4) Specific examples of culturally relevant approaches to
21 parenting, fatherhood support, and young male mentorship include
22 Cara y Corazón, El Joven Noble, and Circulo de Hombres, which
23 have been chosen as the culturally based family strengthening
24 interventions in other initiatives.

25 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that
26 accomplishes all of the following:

27 (1) Supports and creates culturally competent programs that
28 increase opportunities for family friendly contact during and after
29 imprisonment.

30 (2) Funds and creates culturally competent programmatic
31 support services and reentry strategies outside of imprisonment
32 that support fatherhood involvement, family reunification, and
33 family strengthening.

34 (3) Supports expanded funding for innovation on culturally
35 relevant parenting, fatherhood support, and young male mentorship
36 to decrease the risk of violence, suicide, and other traumas that
37 children of prisoners who are under 17 years of age may be exposed
38 to by providing education, skills-based training, and early

- 1 intervention and treatment referrals to parents, families, and
- 2 children.

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