

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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SB-972

AN ACT CONCERNING THE COST OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

As Amended by Senate "A" (LCO 8978)

House Calendar No.: 535

Senate Calendar No.: 269

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Correction, Dept.	GF - Cost	None	3.5-4.5 million
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection; Correction, Dept.; Judicial Dept.	GF - Revenue Loss	None	4.5-5.5 million
Correction, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost	None	See Below
Correction, Dept.	GF - Potential Revenue Loss	None	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill requires the Department of Correction (DOC) to provide telephone services for inmates free of charge beginning October 1, 2022 and results in various costs and revenue losses to the state. Currently, inmates pay for each call and a portion of that money compensates the vendor for providing the service and the remainder goes to the state to fund various programs.

Cost Impact:

- It will cost DOC approximately \$3.5 to \$4.5 million to compensate the vendor for the telephone services beginning

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in FY 23¹. The exact cost will depend on the inmate call volume which could potentially increase due to the fees being removed, inmate population which has been decreasing in recent years, and any future adjustments to the contract between the State and the vendor.

- There is a potential cost to the extent the Commissioner of DOC adds video communication and electronic mail services for inmates because the bill dictates that these services shall be free of charge².

Revenue Impact:

- The bill results in an approximate \$4.5 to \$5.5 million revenue loss to the state in FY 23³. This money goes to DOC for expanding inmate educational services and reentry program initiatives, and the remainder pays for the criminal justice information system (in DESPP) and for probation staffing in the Judicial Department.
- There is a potential revenue loss to the extent the Commissioner of DOC adds video communication and electronic mail services for inmates because the bill prohibits the DOC from receiving revenue for phone or telecommunications services.

Senate "A" specifies that voice or other communication service cannot be used to supplant in-person visits for juveniles in a detention facility. It requires that all communication service for juveniles must be free of charge. This change is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact as the Judicial Department already does not charge juveniles for calls.

Currently the Judicial Department allows each juvenile 15 minutes

¹ The FY 23 cost reflects 9 months due to the October 1, 2022 start date.

² Tablets are currently provided to a limited number of inmates. Some of the services on the tablets are provided free of charge while others have a cost.

³ The FY 23 revenue loss reflects 9 months due to the October 1, 2022 start date.

per day for call to a parent, or legal guardian, as well as additional calls to attorneys, probations officers and DCF staff. Juveniles can earn additional phone calls time based on the behavior motivation program.

The Out Years

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Correction, Dept.	GF - Cost	4.5-5.5 million	4.5-5.5 million	4.5-5.5 million
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection; Correction, Dept.; Judicial Dept.	GF - Revenue Loss	6-7 million	6-7 million	6-7 million
Correction, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost			
Correction, Dept.	GF - Potential Revenue Loss			

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

The annualized cost for paying the vendor for telephone services is approximately \$4.5 to \$5.5 million per year and the annualized revenue loss is \$6 to \$7 million per year. The exact cost and revenue loss will depend on the inmate call volume which could potentially increase due to the fees being removed, inmate population which has been decreasing in recent years, and any future adjustments to the contract between the State and the vendor.

The preceding Fiscal Impact statement is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for the purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.