

**SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FISCAL NOTE**

BILL NO. Senate Bill 522

PRINTER NO. 812

AMOUNT

FY 2016-17 No Fiscal Impact
FY 2017-18 \$10.6 Million Savings

FUND

General Fund

DATE INTRODUCED

March 16, 2017

PRIME SPONSOR

Senator Greenleaf

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF BILL

Senate Bill 522 amends Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) and Title 61 (Prisons and Parole) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, consolidating the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole into a single state agency titled the "Department of Criminal Justice."

Specifically, this legislation does the following:

- Changes the name of the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole to the "Pennsylvania Parole Board" (Board) and establishes it as a departmental administrative board within the Department of Criminal Justice (Department) for the purpose of granting and revoking parole to certain offenders within this Commonwealth;
- Requires Board members to have an advanced degree beyond a bachelor's degree, such as a master's degree, doctorate degree or juris doctorate degree;
- Allows for members of the Board to attend and participate in meetings via videoconferencing or similar virtual presence technology;
- Removes the power of appointment of the secretary of the Board from the members of the Board and places it with the Department;
- Provides that legal counsel for the Board shall be appointed in accordance with the Commonwealth Attorney's Act;
- Authorizes the Board to appoint a sufficient number of hearing examiners to conduct hearings as required or authorized under this title;
- Enhances information-sharing between the Department and the Board to facilitate Board interviews and decisions regarding inmates;
- Removes the power "to supervise and make pre-sentence investigations and reports" from the Board;

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

FISCAL NOTE

- Removes the duties of compiling statistical information about offenders on probation or parole and establishing statewide standards for supervision or qualifications of probation personnel from the Board and places those responsibilities with the Department;
- Authorizes the Board to establish special conditions of supervision for paroled offenders. Conditions of supervision must be based on the risk presented by and the rehabilitative needs of the offender;
- Authorizes the Board to promulgate regulations establishing general conditions of supervision applicable to every paroled offender;
- The time period to be served when an offender is recommitted to state prison will be computed by staff of the Department;
- Adds "parole violator centers" and "group-based homes" to the list of facilities where a technical parole violator can be detained;
- Defines "parole violator center" as an "area within the secure perimeter or on the grounds of a State Correctional Institution or contracted county jail that has been designated to house offenders detained or recommitted by the Board for a technical parole violation;
- Defines "group-based home" as any nonprofit or for-profit entity that maintains a facility that provides housing to individuals on probation or parole or other individuals previously convicted of crimes. The term shall not include a correctional institution or a facility maintained by a domestic violence program.
- Establishes certain notification requirements for group-based homes to inform a municipality where it is located about the residents of the home.
- Provides that the governing body of a municipality or county receiving notification from a group-base home provider may conduct a public hearing concerning the group-based home provider, its site and its operations;
- Requires the Department to notify law enforcement authorities of any criminal offenses committed by residents of a community corrections center, community corrections facility, or community contract facility;
- Further identifies the circumstances in which a technical or convicted parole violator shall be returned to State Correctional Institution instead of a community corrections center or parole violator center;
- Provides that the Board shall have sufficient staff to support its independent function of making decisions on parole and recommitment;
- Removes the duties of supervising and training of parole agents from the Board and places those responsibilities with the Secretary of the Department;

This act shall take effect immediately.

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE

FISCAL IMPACT:

Enactment of this legislation is expected to result in future cost savings and increased efficiencies in the operations of our state correctional institutions and parole services. Additionally, an expected reduction in recidivism may result with the expediting of prisoners' releases from prison and the providing of appropriate supervision.

According to a "Cost Savings from Combining Corrections and Parole" survey by the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA), no exact data is available on the cost savings realized by states that have combined the two agencies. Most states' corrections and parole mergers took place too long ago to determine any cost savings that may have been realized.

Additionally, according to the Governor's Office, the consolidation would provide improved treatment and caseload management, improved public safety, reduced costs and improved accountability.

Enactment of this legislation will have no fiscal impact in fiscal year 2016-17 due to the short amount of time in the fiscal year to implement the provisions of the legislation. However, according to the Department, savings of \$10.609 million are anticipated for fiscal year 2017-18 and projected to grow in future years as noted in the chart below.

Merger Savings Summary					
	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
Complement Savings					
Central Office Doc	\$3,297,000	\$3,363,000	\$3,430,000	\$3,499,000	\$3,569,000
Central Office PBPP	\$1,380,000	\$1,408,000	\$1,436,000	\$1,465,000	\$1,494,000
Reentry	\$5,132,000	\$10,264,000	\$15,396,000	\$15,704,000	\$16,018,000
Complement Total	\$9,809,000	\$15,035,000	\$20,262,000	\$20,668,000	\$21,081,000
Recidivism Reduction	\$800,000	\$3,300,000	\$10,900,000	\$11,100,000	\$11,300,000
Merger Savings Total	\$10,609,000	\$18,335,000	\$31,162,000	\$31,768,000	\$32,381,000

Calculated Cumulative FTE Reductions					
Central Office DOC*	45	45	45	45	45
Central Office PBPP*	13	13	13	13	13
Reentry **	50	100	150	150	150
* Includes filled and vacant - December 2, 2016.					
** Transferred to field supervision staff.					

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

FISCAL NOTE

The \$10.609 million in savings in fiscal year 2017-18 is derived from three components. They are as follows:

- 1) Elimination of duplicative services, streamlining administrative offices and a reduction of duplicative staff positions of the Department and the Board will result in an estimated savings of \$4.677 million;
- 2) Reclassification of non-supervisory positions within the Board to field agent positions will eliminate the need to request additional agents in the FY 2017-18 budget. Those reclassified would have their original position eliminated, resulting in savings, while they would also be fulfilling the need for future scheduled increases in the number of parole agents in the field. This reclassification of personnel will result in an estimated savings of \$5.132 million; and
- 3) Consolidating the two agencies will eliminate inefficiencies and overlap of employee duties and responsibilities that have created barriers to offenders for a successful reentry into society. Additionally, increasing the number of agents in the field will reduce supervisor-to-offender caseloads, thereby improving offender outcomes. These items will reduce levels of recidivism, thereby resulting in an estimated savings of \$800,000.