



An Act to Strengthen Inmate Visitation

This bill would enhance public safety, reduce recidivism, and promote rehabilitation by ensuring that visitation is not unreasonably restricted and by facilitating the maintenance and growth of positive bonds between prisoners and their friends, family, and broader community.

Rep. Decker, H. 2047; Sen. Chang Diaz, S. 1397

2019-2020 legislative session



An Act to Strengthen Inmate Visitation Will:

- Roll back limitations that have been placed on the number of unique individuals who are allowed to visit a prisoner, ensuring that no person is put in the position of having to choose only five people from among their friends and family that they will be able to see
- Ensure that no visitor is excluded solely because they have volunteered in a prison or jail
- Ensure that legal visits are confidential
- Require that the DOC only gather the personal information necessary for the safety and security of the institution and that they keep personal and private information secure
- Permit prisoners to update their pre-authorized visitation list when they need to
- Ensure that no visitor is excluded solely because they have been incarcerated in the past, but still allow any visitor to be excluded if there is a reasonable individualized suspicion that they may pose a threat to security
- Ensure that prisoners are allowed to have contact visitation wherever that is feasible
- Ensure that dress codes are implemented in a reasonable manner and with respect for visitors' religion, race, class, culture, gender identity, and sexual orientation and that no visitor is turned away on the basis of a dress code violation without consultation with a superintendent, shift commander, or designee
- Ensure that visitation may only be restricted as punishment for a disciplinary offense for up to fifteen days
- Ensure that loved ones may see their incarcerated friends and family members if they are transferred to a hospital and in critical condition or in imminent danger of death
- Encourage prison and jail administrators to maximize visitation and make it as free and unencumbered as possible, provided it is not inconsistent with a facility's operational and security needs

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