



82nd Session Select Interim Charges Relating to Criminal Justice

January 13, 2012

Criminal Justice Committee

- Review statutes and regulations relating to money laundering to enhance state, federal, and local efforts to combat money laundering and enforce administrative and criminal actions against perpetrators of money laundering.
- Study and evaluate the long-term stability of the Crime Victims Compensation Fund (CVC) including: the original statutory purpose of the fund; the definition of "crime victim"; the current funding streams; the current ability to pay claims; and impact of the fund on victim organizations supported by the fund. Make recommendations to increase collection rates for effective and efficient use of the fund and resources.
- Study the law governing the Texas bail bond industry and determine local practices for the pretrial release of the accused. Determine the financial impact of various pretrial release options for the accused and the financial impact on counties for the failure to release pretrial.
- Evaluate existing comprehensive diversion and treatment systems within the state, including mental health treatment, to determine cost effectiveness, reductions in correctional populations, impact on healthcare systems, and the overall number of people treated effectively. Examine federal, state and local collaborations and make recommendations for best practices to maximize effective use of funding and resources.
- Study the use of administrative segregation in TDCJ, including issues related to: the frequency and justification of its use; the process and classification system which determines an inmate's placement; the impact on prisoners' mental health and recidivism rates; the process of reviewing placement and inmates' transition into both the general prison population and the general public; options for alternative confinement arrangements; and the potential for the expansion of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) or similar programming in order to improve inmates' transition from solitary confinement to the general public.
- Assess the current trends in prescription drug abuse including: crimes and arrests; abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medication in the prison population; impact on probation violations and recidivism; and incidences of law enforcement as the first responders to prescription drug overdose emergencies. Identify strategies for law enforcement and criminal justice systems to work with education and health care

professionals to use all means, including technology, to identify abuses and increase education and prevention. Make recommendations to enhance drug abuse prevention and intervention programs.

- Conduct a comprehensive review of school discipline practices. Specifically, review and make recommendations on:
 - The effectiveness of Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP) and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs (JJAEP) in reducing students' involvement in further disciplinary infractions and in promoting positive educational achievement;
 - Disproportionate school discipline referrals, including suspension, expulsion and Class C misdemeanor citations;
 - The issue of "Zero Tolerance" in secondary education school discipline, their use of alternative education campuses, and the barriers they create toward graduation. Also include the role that specialized school police departments play in these systems. Consider the impact on the juvenile justice system and the adult prison system;
 - The number of students in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) referred to juvenile or municipal courts, suspended, expelled, and placed in Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP). Examine data-sharing practices between DFPS, TEA, and local education agencies and make recommendations to increase communication between schools and DFPS to increase educational outcomes for children in foster care;
 - Evidence-based models used for addressing juvenile delinquency prevention that are targeted to non-adjudicated, but at-risk youth, in the school disciplinary system. (Joint with Senate Committee Education Committee)

- Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, 82nd Legislature, Regular and Called Sessions, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, monitor the following:
 - Implementation of and transition to the new Texas Juvenile Justice Department. Examine the consolidation of the probation and parole functions, and make recommendations to enhance the integration of the two agencies and promote successful outcomes for youths, victims, and taxpayers;
 - Overall care of female inmates;
 - Implementation of SB 1616 and SB 1636, relating to the testing of evidence;
 - Implementation of SB 321, relating to an employee's lawful transportation and storage of certain firearms or ammunition while on property owned or controlled by the employee's employer;
 - Implementation of legislation relating to human trafficking in coordination with the Joint Interim Committee to Study Human Trafficking.