

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.H.B. 1660
By: Flores (Hinojosa)
Criminal Justice
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Committee Report (Amended)

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Current law does not require that county jails operate video camera surveillance systems within their respective facilities. However, a high level of surveillance cameras is necessary within these facilities to ensure that the inmates, depending upon their incarceration program, are maintained in their areas, along with guaranteeing the security of the guards and the inmates. H.B. 1660 requires the Commission on Jail Standards to report to certain state officials regarding the installation and operation of video camera surveillance systems in county jails.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 351, Local Government Code, by adding Section 351.016, as follows:

Sec. 351.016. REPORT TO LEGISLATURE ON VIDEO CAMERA SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS. (a) Requires the Commission on Jail Standards, not later than December 1, 2004, to submit to the presiding officer of each house of the legislature and to the presiding officer of the standing committee of the house of representatives having primary jurisdiction over county affairs a report that describes:

- (1) the feasibility of installing and operating in county jails video camera surveillance systems that record video images in each jail corridor, solitary confinement cell, suicide watch cell, kitchen, and dining area, or other common area;
- (2) the probability and nature of changes in technology affecting the installation and operation of systems described by Subdivision (1);
- (3) potential sources of revenue available to counties to pay for video camera surveillance systems, including jail commissary proceeds and possible increases in court costs;
- (4) areas in county jails not described by Subdivision (1) that nonetheless should be monitored by surveillance systems; and
- (5) the feasibility of implementing and using other cost-effective means to address the issues presenting an apparent need for video camera surveillance systems, such as a system ensuring that medical records accompany inmates at each stage of incarceration; a system of separating inmates according to offense seriousness; a program to identify inmates with illnesses or with suicidal tendencies; and a program to provide individual counseling to inmates on their admission to jail.

(b) Provides that this section expires December 2, 2004.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2003.

LIST OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

Amend H.B. No. 1660 (engrossed version), on page 2, between lines 12 and 13, by inserting a new subsection (b), Section 351.016, Local Government Code, to read as follows and redesignating existing Subsection (b) and (c):

(b) The Commission on Jails Standards shall include in the report submitted under Subsection (a) information stating by county:

- (1) the number of suicides committed by inmates confined in the county jail;
- (2) the number of assaults committed against inmates confined in the county jail;
- (3) the number of assaults committed by inmates confined in the county jail against the sheriff or an officer or employee of the county jail;
- (4) the number of lawsuits filed against the county as result of suicides and assaults;
- (5) the cost incurred by the county in defending those lawsuits; and
- (6) the judgments awarded against the county in those lawsuits.