

EXCERPT From Act 58 of 2015

Amended Charge: Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee

Sec. E.335 2 V.S.A. chapter 23 is redesignated to read:

CHAPTER 23. JOINT LEGISLATIVE ~~CORRECTIONS~~ JUSTICE OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE

Sec. E.335.1 2 V.S.A. § 801 is amended to read:

§ 801. CREATION OF COMMITTEE

- (a) There is created a ~~joint legislative corrections oversight committee~~ Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee whose membership shall be appointed each biennial session of the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly. The ~~committee~~ Committee shall exercise oversight over the ~~department of corrections~~ Department of Corrections and work with and provide assistance to other legislative committees on matters related to ~~corrections~~ juvenile justice and criminal justice policies.
- (b) The ~~committee~~ Committee shall be composed of 10 members: five members of the ~~house of representatives~~ House of Representatives, who shall not all be from the same party, appointed by the ~~speaker of the house~~ Speaker of the House; and five members of the ~~senate~~ Senate, who shall not all be from the same party, appointed by the ~~committee on committees~~ Committee on Committees. In addition to one member-at-large appointed from each chamber, one appointment shall be made from each of the ~~following house and senate~~ House and Senate Committees: ~~appropriations, judiciary, institutions on Appropriations and on Judiciary, the senate committee on health and welfare, and the house committee on human services~~ Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and on Institutions, and the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Human Services.

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(c) The ~~committee~~ Committee shall elect a chair, vice chair, and clerk from among its members and shall adopt rules of procedure. The ~~chair~~ Chair shall rotate biennially between the ~~house~~ House and the ~~senate~~ Senate members. The ~~committee~~ Committee shall keep minutes of its meetings and maintain a file thereof. A quorum shall consist of six members.

(d) When the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly is in session, the ~~committee~~ Committee shall meet at the call of the ~~chair~~ Chair. The ~~committee~~ Committee may meet six times during adjournment, and may meet more often subject to approval of the ~~speaker of the house~~ Speaker of the House and the ~~president pro tempore of the senate~~ President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

(e) For attendance at a meeting when the ~~general assembly~~ General Assembly is not in session, members of the ~~committee~~ Committee shall be entitled to compensation for services and reimbursement of expenses as provided under subsection 406(a) of this title.

(f) The professional and clerical services of the ~~joint fiscal office~~ Joint Fiscal Office and the ~~legislative council~~ Office of Legislative Council shall be available to the ~~committee~~ Committee.

Sec. E.335.2 2 V.S.A. § 802 is amended to read:

§ 802. DUTIES

(a) In addition to the general responsibilities set forth in subsection 801(a) of this title, the Committee shall:

(1) ~~Review~~ review and make recommendations regarding the Department of Corrections' strategic, operating, and capital plans;

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- (2) ~~Review~~ review and make recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations regarding departmental budget proposals;
- (3) ~~Provide~~ provide general oversight on departmental policy development;
- (4) ~~Encourage~~ encourage improved communication between the ~~department~~ Department and other relevant components of the administrative branch and the criminal justice system;
- (5) evaluate the statewide system of pretrial services, court diversion programs, community justice center services, and other relevant programs and services, and determine whether there is variation in policies, procedures, practices, and results among different areas of the State and the causes of any such variation;
- (6) make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the creation of a consistent and cost-efficient statewide juvenile justice system and criminal justice system;
- (7) review and make recommendations to the General Assembly to ensure the juvenile justice and criminal justice statutes reflect principles of restorative justice; and
- (8) review and make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the timeliness of judicial proceedings.
- (b) ~~At least annually, the Committee shall report its activities, together with recommendations, if any, to the General Assembly. The provisions of subsection 20(d) (expiration of required reports) of this title shall not apply to the report to be made under this subsection. [Repealed.]~~

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Sec. E.335.3 JOINT LEGISLATIVE JUSTICE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE;

2015 INTERIM MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) The membership of the Joint Legislative Corrections Oversight Committee appointed for the 2015-2016 biennial session of the General Assembly shall also be the first appointed membership of the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee, as established in Sec. E.335.1 of this act.

(b) During the 2015 legislative interim, the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee shall:

(1) Analyze to what extent the criminal justice system is impacted by school disciplinary matters, including review of the available data regarding use of exclusionary discipline in Vermont public and approved independent schools and whether to identify whether students' access to education is impaired as a result of disciplinary actions.

(2) Review issues related to transports by sheriffs and other law enforcement agencies for the following populations:

(A) Criminal offenders, defendants, detainees, and other persons in the custody of the Department of Corrections. The Committee shall consider flexibility in the hourly rate for reimbursement to sheriffs.

(B) Juveniles in the custody of the Department for Children and Families. The Committee shall consider methods to improve the transport of children in accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 7511 and reduce the number of children transported in restraints.

(C) Persons in the custody of the Department of Mental Health. The Committee shall review compliance with the requirements of 18 V.S.A. § 7511 and review and make recommendations for standards for transport reimbursement, including

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the appropriate training, authorization process, required documentation and reports, and payment level for transports made using soft restraints.

(3) In light of the Department of Corrections' aging facilities and reliance on out-of-state beds to house Vermont's incarcerated populations, review and make recommendations on the advisability and feasibility of:

(A) Continued reduction in the need for out-of-state beds;

(B) closing a State facility in 2017;

(C) creating a centralized correctional facility for all incarcerated men in the State or establishing one centralized detention facility for statewide use in an optimal location, or both.

(c) On or before November 1, 2015, the Court Administrator, the Department for Children and Families, the Department of Corrections, the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, the Defender General, and any other impacted entity deemed relevant by the Committee shall report to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee on the estimated fiscal year 2017 avoided costs resulting from the budget and cost-saving measures undertaken during the 2015 legislative session, including whether there are any reductions in Department of Corrections' demand for out-of-state beds, and reductions in demand for sheriffs' transports resulting from expansion of home detention and video conferencing initiatives.

(d) The Oversight Committee shall report their findings and recommendations resulting from the analysis and reviews required by subsections (b) and (c) of this section to the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary and on Appropriations and the House

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Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions on
or before January 15, 2016.