

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 50th Legislature (2006)

SENATE BILL 1823

By: Lawler

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to corrections amending Section 3, Chapter 346, O.S.L. 2003 (57 O.S. Supp. 2005, Section 614), which relates to faith-based programs; directing selection and implementation of certain pilot faith-based programs; requiring promulgation of certain rules; requiring certain training for certain persons; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY Section 3, Chapter 346, O.S.L. 2003 (57 O.S. Supp. 2005, Section 614), is amended to read as follows:

Section 614. A. The Legislature finds and declares that faith-based programs offered in state and private correctional institutions and facilities have the potential to facilitate inmate institutional adjustment, to help inmates assume personal responsibility, and to reduce recidivism. It is the intent of the Legislature that the Department of Corrections and private vendors operating private correctional facilities work towards ensuring the availability and development of such programs at the correctional institutions and facilities of this state and shall continuously:

1. Measure recidivism rates for all inmates participating in faith-based or religious programs at the correctional institution or facility;

2. Work with volunteers ministering to inmates from various faith-based institutions in this state to improve the quality of faith-based programs at the correctional institution or facility;

3. Continue to develop community linkages with churches, synagogues, mosques, and other faith-based institutions to assist in the release of participants into the community; and

4. Monitor faith-based programs operating in the correctional institution or facility.

B. Beginning July 1, 2006, the Department of Corrections shall select and begin implementation of one or more pilot faith-based programs in the correctional institutions operated by the Department. At least one shall be for female inmates and at least one shall be for male inmates. The Department shall promulgate rules that accommodate the operational needs of the faith-based program, including but not limited to, access to inmates by volunteers and program personnel and enhanced opportunities for inmates to participate in a pro-social environment where values and responsibilities are appropriately rewarded and where there exists a recognizable change from current prison culture and institutionalization without actual release of any inmate or compromise to the safety or security of any person or property. Every person participating in faith-based programs in correctional institutions shall be required to complete the Department's volunteer training program in addition to being trained to develop the faith-based program.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2006.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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