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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT



SPONSOR: King DATE TYPED: 01/24/02 HB 110

SHORT TITLE: Parent Child Visitation Program SB _____

ANALYST: Trujillo

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY02	FY03	FY02	FY03		
	\$30.0			Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in The General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From:

Department of Health (DOH)
Corrections Department (CD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 110 appropriates \$30,000 from the general fund to CD for the purpose of providing transportation costs for the parent-child visitation program at the New Mexico Women's Correctional Facility.

Significant Issues

CD reports the appropriation will likely have a beneficial impact upon the department's female prison program. It is possible that the funding of such transportation costs will improve the behavior of female inmates who receive visits from their children, both while the women are in prison as well as when they are released. There is also some possibility the bill will may reduce the recidivism rate by female inmates.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$30,000 contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year shall revert to the general fund.

CD reports the department would contract for such transportation services and the \$30,000 would be sufficient for fiscal year 2003. In later years cost savings could result if the bill resulted in significantly lower recidivism rates by female inmates who have young children.

RELATIONSHIP

The LFC recommendation includes \$1 million in substance abuse treatment funds to provide residential treatment and family and reintegration services for female offenders with children under the age of 11.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

According to a 1998 report, "Women in New Mexico's Prison", Peanut Butter and Jelly Family Services, Inc., most women in the facility are between 20 and 25 and are not married. Ninety four percent (94%) of the women have children, and 81% of the children are under 18 years old. The average woman in prison had more than one child, with the largest single percentage being of women with three children. Just over half of all the children were in the care of their mothers when they were arrested. About half the mothers in the facility expect to be responsible for their children when they are released from prison. Almost all mothers in prison try to keep in contact with their children. The majority of the women are in prison for non-violent crimes, with the average women prisoner in Grants being sentenced for 5.5 years.

Maintaining parent-child bonds is critical for the emotional well being of children with mothers in prison and to women's successful re-integration upon release. Children of incarcerated parents are at greater risk for behavioral problems and school failure.

Women in the Grants prison come from all over the State and transportation for the children is a significant barrier to participation in the parent-visitation program. HB 110 would increase access to parent-child visitation by providing financial assistance for gas and lodging to the families of incarcerated parents.

LAT/prr/njw