

SB 241 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Judiciary

Prepared By: Whitney Perez, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 5/10

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes certain essential rights as "bill of rights of children of incarcerated parents." Requires Department of Corrections to assign implementation of bill of rights to a public body.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Nationally, between 1991 and midyear 2007, there was an increase of 79 percent in the number of incarcerated people with children. The August 2000 Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report noted that the majority of children with a parent in prison were under age 10. In Oregon, there are around 70,000 children who have had or currently have incarcerated parents. Children with incarcerated parents can experience a variety of stress and detrimental impacts, including those that result from added financial burdens on families, mental and physical health issues, and difficulties that arise when a parent is reintegrating back into a family and society.

Senate Bill 241-A establishes certain essential rights for children of incarcerated parents as a "bill of rights of children of incarcerated parents." It includes rights related to maintaining relationships between parents and children, informing and caring for children during a parent's incarceration, consideration of a child's wishes in decision making processes, and maintaining a relationship and contact with parents in incarceration. The Department of Corrections is responsible for assigning implementation to a public body.