

HB 3145

Relating to the Public Defense Services Commission

HB 3145 relates to reform of the state’s indigent public defense services system. In January 2019, a report released by the Sixth Amendment Center highlighted serious deficiencies in the state’s system of public defense. Among other things, it found the current method of paying attorneys creates an incentive to do as little work as possible on a case because no matter how much work the lawyers do, they get paid the same amount. It also found that the Commission lacks an effective system of program oversight and financial accountability.

The measure creates a 17-member Task Force on Public Defense to review requirements and best practices related to the delivery and oversight of public defense services and make recommendations to the Legislature for providing effective public defense statewide. The task force is required to provide an update on the status of its work by February 1, 2020, and a final written report with recommendations and an implementation plan by December 30, 2020.

The Capital Construction Subcommittee recommends HB 3145 be amended by the –A6 amendment and be reported out do pass, as amended.