

**House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Public Safety and Corrections**

Minutes of Meeting
2017 Regular Session
April 6, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Tony Bacala, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Public Safety and Corrections, called the meeting to order at 8:46 a.m. in Room 5, in the State Capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The secretary called the roll.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Tony Bacala, Chairman
Representative Robert E. Billiot
Representative Franklin J. Foil

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Blake Miguez
Representative Steve E. Pylant

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Katie Andress, Secretary
Mr. Mark Antoon, Budget Analyst

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Representative John A. Berthelot
Representative Charles R. Chaney
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Valarie Hodges
Representative Jack G. McFarland
Representative Jerome Richard
Ms. Faye Talbot, Sergeant at Arms
Ms. Vivian Hurst, Sergeant at Arms

III. DISCUSSION

House Bill No. 1 by Representative Henry

The following agencies contained in House Bill No. 1 were presented and discussed:

Department of Public Safety and Corrections

Corrections Services

Mr. Mark Antoon, Budget Analyst for the House Fiscal Division, 900 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 342-2412, presented an overview of the department and discussed the FY17-18 budget.

Secretary James M. LeBlanc, Department of Corrections, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70884, (225) 342-6702, discussed the impact of FY17-18 budget reductions to the department and the employee turn-over rate for correctional and probation officers.

Secretary LeBlanc discussed alternative methods of executing inmates on death row, the cost of Hepatitis C medication, and the cost per day for local jails and state prisons with Representative McFarland.

Mr. Thomas Bickham, Undersecretary for the Department of Corrections, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70884, no telephone number provided, discussed the reduction to funding for sheriff's local housing of state inmates with Representative McFarland.

Mr. Antoon discussed expenditures in the "Other Charges" category with Representative McFarland.

Secretary LeBlanc discussed the recommendations made by the Justice Reinvestment Task Force and the department's efforts to evaluate and treat inmates with mental health issues with Representative Hodges. He and Mr. Bickham also discussed the department's use and oversight of state issued credit cards (P-cards) with Representatives Bacala and Hodges.

Secretary LeBlanc discussed the profiles of inmates in Allen and Winn Correctional Centers, the Transitional Work Program for inmates, and the benefits of having a facility to evaluate incoming inmates in local jails with Representative Billiot.

Mr. Curtis "Pete" Fremin, Director of the Office of Probation and Parole, 481 Crochet Street, Morganza, LA 70759, (225) 342-6604, and Mr. Danny Barras, Supervisor of the New Iberia Probation and Parole District, 1221 Adrian Street, New Iberia, LA 70560, (337) 373-0014, discussed the agency's turn-over rate and the need for merit increases with Representatives Bacala and Richard.

Secretary LeBlanc discussed the department's turn-over rate and recruitment issues with Representative Bacala.

Mr. Barras and Mr. Bickham discussed the job progression series for parole officers with Representative Bacala.

Secretary LeBlanc and Mr. Bickham discussed the re-entry program at the Louisiana State Penitentiary and the department's funded vacancies with Representative Edmonds.

Representative Bacala was granted a personal privilege to recognize former Representative, Thomas P. Willmott, and Representative Joseph A. Stagni.

Mr. Antoon and Mr. Bickham discussed funding for the budget shortfall in sheriff's local housing with Representative Edmonds. Mr. Bickham also discussed the department's efforts to absorb a reduction in the FY17-18 budget with Representative Edmonds.

Secretary LeBlanc and Mr. Bickham discussed the effects of Medicaid expansion on the department and the department's pharmaceutical costs with Representative Edmonds.

Secretary LeBlanc discussed the cost to house an inmate, the correlation between the state's population and the number of parolees, and the cost per day for sheriff's local housing of state inmates with Representative Bacala.

Public Safety Services

Mr. Antoon presented an overview of the department and discussed the FY17-18 budget.

Lt. Colonel Jason Starnes, Chief Administrative Officer, Louisiana State Police, 7919 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 925-6032, discussed federal funding for highway safety grants with Representative Berthelot.

Lt. Colonel Starnes discussed funding budgeted for a State Police Academy class in FY17-18 with Representative McFarland. He and Mr. Antoon also discussed the need for Troop N in the French Quarter in New Orleans and the anticipated revenue generated to reimburse the department for Troop N with Representatives Edmonds and McFarland.

Lt. Colonel Starnes discussed the impact of the projected decline in statutory dedications to the department and the Legislative Auditor's findings regarding a lack of internal controls within the department with Representative Hodges. He also discussed the impact of a 2% budget reduction in FY17-18 with Representative Edmonds.

Lt. Colonel Starnes discussed disaster recovery expenditures eligible for FEMA reimbursement with Representatives Bacala and Billiot. He and Colonel Kevin Reeves, Interim Superintendent of the Louisiana State Police, 7919 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 925-6202, also discussed the cost to cover expenditures incurred by Troop N in the French Quarter and pulling resources from other troops to work in Troop N with Representative Bacala.

Youth Services

Mr. Antoon presented an overview of the department and discussed the FY17-18 budget.

Dr. James Bueche, Deputy Secretary of the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ), 7919 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 287-7900, presented an overview of the department and the state's secure care facilities. (See Exhibit A)

Dr. Bueche discussed the number of juveniles within the secure care facilities and employee merit increases with Representative Bacala. He also discussed the impact of adding seventeen year olds to the OJJ System, the funding needed to open and operate the Acadiana facility, the department's staffing issues, and the impact of case load increases to probation officers with Representative Chaney.

Dr. Bueche discussed improvements implemented at the Bridge City facility, the sources of funding for the department, the process for a juvenile to be released from secure care, and the Tax Intercept Program with Representative Billiot.

Dr. Bueche and Mr. Geary T. Williams, OJJ Undersecretary, 7919 Independence Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 287-7914, discussed the impact of FY17-18 budget reductions to the department, the amount of funded vacancies within the department, and the turn-over rate for direct care positions with Representative Bacala.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Bacala offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 3 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Bacala, Billiot, and Foil voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Tony Bacala
Subcommittee on Public Safety and Corrections