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AB-2321 Juveniles: room confinement. (2021-2022)

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Assembly Bill No. 2321

CHAPTER 781

An act to amend Section 208.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to juveniles.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2022. Filed with Secretary of State September 29, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2321, Jones-Sawyer. Juveniles: room confinement.

Existing law places restrictions on the use of room confinement of minors or wards who are confined in a juvenile facility, as specified, and requires the placement of a minor or ward in room confinement to be conducted in accordance with specified guidelines. Existing law excludes from the definition of room confinement the confinement of a minor or ward in a single-person room or cell for brief periods of locked room confinement necessary for required institutional operations.

This bill would limit that exclusion to periods of confinement no longer than 2 hours. The bill would also require minors and wards who are confined to be provided reasonable access to toilets at all hours. By increasing the duties of local entities in connection with local juvenile facilities, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that with regard to certain mandates no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

With regard to any other mandates, this bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs so mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 208.3 of the Welfare and Institutions Code is amended to read:

208.3. (a) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Juvenile facility" includes any of the following:

(A) A juvenile hall, as described in Section 850.

(B) A juvenile camp or ranch, as described in Article 24 (commencing with Section 880).

(C) A facility of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice.

(D) A regional youth educational facility, as described in Section 894.

(E) A youth correctional center, as described in Article 9 (commencing with Section 1850) of Chapter 1 of Division 2.5.

(F) A juvenile regional facility as described in Section 5695.

(G) Any other local or state facility used for the confinement of minors or wards.

(2) "Minor" means a person who is any of the following:

(A) A person under 18 years of age.

(B) A person under the maximum age of juvenile court jurisdiction who is confined in a juvenile facility.

(C) A person under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice.

(3) "Room confinement" means the placement of a minor or ward in a locked sleeping room or cell with minimal or no contact with persons other than correctional facility staff and attorneys. Room confinement does not include confinement of a minor or ward in a locked single-person room or cell for a brief period lasting no longer than two hours when it is necessary for required institutional operations.

(4) "Ward" means a person who has been declared a ward of the court pursuant to Section 602.

(b) The placement of a minor or ward in room confinement shall be accomplished in accordance with the following guidelines:

(1) Room confinement shall not be used before other less restrictive options have been attempted and exhausted, unless attempting those options poses a threat to the safety or security of any minor, ward, or staff.

(2) Room confinement shall not be used for the purposes of punishment, coercion, convenience, or retaliation by staff.

(3) Room confinement shall not be used to the extent that it compromises the mental and physical health of the minor or ward.

(c) A minor or ward may be held up to four hours in room confinement. After the minor or ward has been held in room confinement for a period of four hours, staff shall do one or more of the following:

(1) Return the minor or ward to general population.

(2) Consult with mental health or medical staff.

(3) Develop an individualized plan that includes the goals and objectives to be met in order to reintegrate the minor or ward to general population.

(d) If room confinement must be extended beyond four hours, staff shall do the following:

(1) Document the reason for room confinement and the basis for the extension, the date and time the minor or ward was first placed in room confinement, and when the minor or ward is eventually released from room confinement.

(2) Develop an individualized plan that includes the goals and objectives to be met in order to reintegrate the minor or ward to general population.

(3) Obtain documented authorization by the facility superintendent or their designee every four hours thereafter.

(e) This section is not intended to limit the use of single-person rooms or cells for the housing of minors or wards in juvenile facilities and, except as provided in subdivision (f), does not apply to normal sleeping hours.

(f) Minors and wards who are confined shall be provided reasonable access to toilets at all hours, including during normal sleeping hours.

(g) This section does not apply to minors or wards in court holding facilities or adult facilities.

(h) This section shall not be construed to conflict with any law providing greater or additional protections to minors or wards.

(i) This section does not apply during an extraordinary, emergency circumstance that requires a significant departure from normal institutional operations, including a natural disaster or facilitywide threat that poses an imminent and substantial risk of harm to multiple staff, minors, or wards. This exception shall apply for the shortest amount of time needed to address the imminent and substantial risk of harm.

(j) This section does not apply when a minor or ward is placed in a locked cell or sleeping room to treat and protect against the spread of a communicable disease for the shortest amount of time required to reduce the risk of infection, with the written approval of a licensed physician or nurse practitioner, when the minor or ward is not required to be in an infirmary for an illness. Additionally, this section does not apply when a minor or ward is placed in a locked cell or sleeping room for required extended care after medical treatment with the written approval of a licensed physician or nurse practitioner, when the minor or ward is not required to be in an infirmary for illness.

SEC. 2. To the extent that this act has an overall effect of increasing certain costs already borne by a local agency for programs or levels of service mandated by the 2011 Realignment Legislation within the meaning of Section 36 of Article XIII of the California Constitution, it shall apply to local agencies only to the extent that the state provides annual funding for the cost increase. Any new program or higher level of service provided by a local agency pursuant to this act above the level for which funding has been provided shall not require a subvention of funds by the state or otherwise be subject to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

However, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains other costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.