

By: Turner of Harris

H.B. No. 968

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice inmate grievance system.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 501.008, Government Code, is amended by adding Subsections (b-1) and (b-2) to read as follows:

(b-1) The department shall implement and enforce a zero-tolerance policy for failure to protect inmates from retaliation for filing a grievance.

(b-2) The department shall annually submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and appropriate standing committees of the legislature a comprehensive report containing:

(1) the number and nature of grievances filed on each unit;

(2) the number and nature of grievances appealed to the highest authority provided for in the grievance system from each unit;

(3) if the highest authority provided for in the grievance system overturns a unit grievance:

(A) a detailed explanation describing the reasons for the denial of the original grievance;

(B) the response given to the inmate on the original grievance; and

1 (C) the reason that the unit grievance was
2 overturned;

3 (4) an overview of what each unit would need to resolve
4 future grievances, based on the number and nature of grievances
5 filed at the unit level and appealed to the highest authority
6 provided for in the grievance system; and

7 (5) an overview, across units, of major causes for
8 grievances, identifying patterns of commonly recurring problems
9 and making recommendations in regard to addressing those recurring
10 problems.

11 SECTION 2. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice shall
12 submit the first report required by Section 501.008(b-2),
13 Government Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1,
14 2014.

15 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
16 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
17 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
18 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
19 Act takes effect September 1, 2013.