

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 428
By: Shaheen
Corrections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that some offenders incarcerated for sexual offenses use pen pal websites in order to gain the trust of vulnerable individuals who may become subject to sexual abuse by the offender upon release. H.B. 428 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to adopt a policy prohibiting certain inmates from placing an advertisement soliciting a pen pal on a website operated for that purpose.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 428 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), not later than December 1, 2019, to adopt a policy that prohibits an inmate confined in a facility operated by or under contract with TDCJ who is serving a sentence for an offense for which registration as a sex offender is required from placing an advertisement soliciting a pen pal on a website operated for that purpose, regardless of whether another person submits or pays for the advertisement for the inmate.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.