

By: White

H.B. No. 3447

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to certain procedures concerning the welfare of prisoners  
3 confined in county jails.

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

5 SECTION 1. Chapter 511, Government Code, is amended by  
6 adding Sections 511.022, 511.023, and 511.024 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 511.022. FAMILY LIAISON OFFICER. (a) The commission  
8 shall require the sheriff of a county to designate one employee at  
9 the county jail to serve as the family liaison officer for the jail  
10 to facilitate the maintenance of ties between prisoners and their  
11 families for the purpose of reducing recidivism.

12 (b) The family liaison officer shall:

13 (1) provide prisoners' relatives with information  
14 about the classification status, location, and health of prisoners  
15 at the county jail;

16 (2) notify prisoners about emergencies involving  
17 their families and provide prisoners with other necessary  
18 information relating to their families;

19 (3) assist prisoners' relatives and other persons  
20 during visits with prisoners and aid those persons in resolving  
21 problems that may affect permitted contact with prisoners; and

22 (4) inform individuals who possess a reference number  
23 described by Section 511.023 when the applicable prisoner requires  
24 any medical attention outside of routine medical checks.

1       Sec. 511.023. MEDICAL AUTHORIZATION FORM. (a) The  
2 commission shall adopt a medical authorization form for a prisoner  
3 to authorize the release of the prisoner's medical information by  
4 the county jail to an individual named in the form.

5       (b) On request of a prisoner, a county jail shall submit to  
6 the commission a medical authorization form signed by the prisoner.  
7 As soon as practicable after receiving the form, the commission  
8 shall provide a reference number by mail or facsimile to:

9           (1) the individual named by the prisoner in the form;  
10 and

11           (2) the county jail that submitted the form.

12       (c) An individual named in a medical authorization form may  
13 obtain medical information concerning the prisoner from the  
14 applicable county jail, including the family liaison officer for  
15 the county jail, by providing the reference number described by  
16 Subsection (b) to the county jail.

17       Sec. 511.024. COMPLAINT INSPECTIONS AND REPORT. (a) On  
18 receipt by the commission of a complaint alleging abuse or neglect  
19 of a prisoner, including medical neglect, or unsafe conditions at a  
20 county jail, the commission shall check on the health and  
21 well-being of prisoners at the jail.

22       (b) Not later than February 1 of each year, the commission  
23 shall submit to the governor and the presiding officer of each house  
24 of the legislature a report on the complaints described by  
25 Subsection (a) that the commission received during the preceding  
26 year. The report must include, for each county jail, the total  
27 number of:

- 1           (1) complaints submitted;  
2           (2) complaints submitted for each category of  
3 allegation, including complaints alleging medical neglect and  
4 complaints alleging that the family liaison officer for the jail  
5 failed to disclose medical information to an individual who  
6 possesses a reference number described by Section 511.023; and  
7           (3) complaints that were resolved by the commission.

8           (c) The commission may submit the report required under  
9 Subsection (b) with the report required under Section [511.015](#).

10           SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date  
11 of this Act, the Commission on Jail Standards shall adopt the form  
12 required by Section 511.023, Government Code, as added by this Act.

13           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.