

By: Bryant

H.B. No. 2997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the temperature at which certain facilities operated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice are maintained.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 501, Government Code, is amended by adding Sections 501.028 and 501.029 to read as follows:

Sec. 501.028. TEMPERATURE REQUIREMENTS AT DEPARTMENT FACILITIES. (a) The department shall ensure that the temperature in each facility operated by the department and used to house inmates or in which department staff regularly work is maintained at not less than 65 degrees Fahrenheit or more than 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

(b) The department shall install and maintain an electronic temperature gauge in the following areas of each facility described by Subsection (a):

(1) hospitals;

(2) visiting areas;

(3) housing or dormitory areas;

(4) trustee areas;

(5) areas used for medical treatment or care, including areas used for dispensing medication to inmates;

(6) kitchens or dining areas;

(7) food preparation areas;

(8) community areas, including dayrooms;

1 (9) laundry areas;

2 (10) areas used for work stations;

3 (11) indoor recreational areas, including gymnasiums;

4 (12) restroom and shower areas and other areas related
5 to inmate hygiene;

6 (13) administrative areas;

7 (14) correctional officer stations, including guard
8 post areas;

9 (15) commissary areas;

10 (16) areas used for programmatic, educational, or
11 vocational purposes;

12 (17) chapels or churches;

13 (18) libraries; and

14 (19) maintenance areas.

15 (c) The department shall:

16 (1) maintain a log of the temperatures recorded by
17 each electronic temperature gauge under Subsection (b) on an hourly
18 basis in an electronic format; and

19 (2) publish the log, at least quarterly, on the
20 department's publicly accessible Internet website.

21 Sec. 501.029. REPORT REGARDING AIR CONDITIONING. Not later
22 than December 1 of each year, the department shall submit to the
23 governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of
24 representatives, and each standing committee of the legislature
25 with primary jurisdiction over the department a report regarding
26 air conditioning in facilities operated by the department and used
27 to house inmates or in which department staff regularly work. The

1 report must include the following information for the preceding
2 12-month period:

3 (1) the number of facilities in which the air
4 conditioning system has failed;

5 (2) the number of incidents in which the air
6 conditioning in a facility was not operational and the reason for
7 each incident;

8 (3) the number of incidents in which the temperature
9 was not maintained at the temperature range required under Section
10 501.028(a) and the reason for each incident;

11 (4) for each incident described by Subdivision (2)
12 that was due to an equipment malfunction, a summary of the steps
13 taken by the department to address the malfunction and ensure the
14 well-being of inmates and staff at the facility; and

15 (5) for each incident described by Subdivision (3), a
16 summary of the steps taken by the department to address the cause of
17 the incident and ensure the well-being of inmates and staff at the
18 facility.

19 SECTION 2. (a) The Texas Department of Criminal Justice is
20 not required to fully comply with the requirements of Section
21 501.028, Government Code, as added by this Act, until September 1,
22 2026.

23 (b) Not later than September 1, 2026, the Texas Department
24 of Criminal Justice shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant
25 governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each
26 standing committee of the legislature with primary jurisdiction
27 over the department a report regarding the department's progress

1 toward complying with Section 501.028, Government Code, as added by
2 this Act, in all facilities to which that section applies.

3 (c) The Texas Department of Criminal Justice shall submit
4 the first report required by Section 501.029, Government Code, as
5 added by this Act, not later than December 1, 2027.

6 SECTION 3. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of this
7 section, this Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of
8 two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by
9 Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not
10 receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes
11 effect September 1, 2025.

12 (b) Section 501.029, Government Code, as added by this Act,
13 takes effect September 1, 2027.