



## DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS

270 Washington St., S.W., Suite 1-156  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-8400

**Greg S. Griffin**  
STATE AUDITOR  
(404) 656-2174

January 19, 2018

Honorable David Dreyer  
State Representative  
604-D Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note  
House Bill (LC 29 7716)

Dear Representative Dreyer:

This bill requires that inmates be provided access to feminine hygiene products and health education, requires that custodians of female inmates undergo gender sensitivity and trauma training, and places limits on how strip searches are conducted and who may conduct them. The Board of Corrections would also be required to provide a one-year nursery program for children born to inmates.

The bill would result in additional costs for the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) and the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC), but other state agencies impacted by the bill – the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (POST), the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Georgia Bureau of Investigations (GBI) – did not anticipate additional state funding needs.

### Costs for GDC

GDC costs include an estimated \$7.9 million for initial, one-time costs for the nursery program and \$1.9 million in annual, ongoing expenditures (Table 1 on the following page). All but \$132,000 of the annual costs are for the nursery program. GDC stated that policies related to training, inmate searches, and inmate placement are already consistent with the bill.

In the last five years, GDC reported an average of 55 births to incarcerated female offenders. Because some births are to inmates who are prohibited by court order from parental contact and others to inmates just prior to release, the fiscal note estimates the cost for a nursery that accommodates 40 mother/infant pairs. The nursery would be located in a metro Atlanta facility, one of five GDC facilities for females.

**Table 1. GDC Costs, LC 29 7716**

	One-Time Costs	Annual Costs
Nursery – Design/Construct/Equip	\$7,900,000	
Nursery – Staffing		\$1,317,000
Nursery – Regular Operating		\$440,000
<u>Health Educators</u>		<u>\$132,000</u>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$7,900,000</b>	<b>\$1,889,000</b>

GDC does not currently have a facility capable of serving as a nursery. Its Engineering and Construction Services unit estimated a one-time cost of designing, constructing, and equipping a 24,000 to 27,000 square foot facility to be \$7.9 million. The agency estimated \$1.3 million annually for 21.6 FTEs to include correctional officers, counselors, nursery workers, and health providers. Finally, regular operating expenses were estimated at \$440,000.

The cost estimate for the nursery program is based on two key assumptions:

- **No infant healthcare costs** – The nursery program costs do not include healthcare for the infants, but the extent of any additional healthcare costs to the state is unknown. Many female inmates have engaged in high-risk activities before or during their pregnancy, which can increase the child’s medical costs.<sup>1</sup> However, many children born to inmates are likely already enrolled in Medicaid. As a result, the state is already incurring healthcare costs for these infants. If GDC becomes responsible for any healthcare costs of infants, the bill’s costs would be higher.
- **Nursery program for GDC inmates only** – The bill states that the Board of Corrections will provide a one-year nursery program to inmates. The fiscal note assumes that the board is only responsible for providing the program to those inmates in custody of GDC. If the board is responsible for providing nursery programs in DJJ facilities and local jails throughout the state, the costs would likely be significantly higher.

Costs for GPSTC

GPSTC would provide gender sensitivity and trauma training to local or state agencies that do not utilize in-house training staff. As shown in Table 2, the costs would vary depending on how the course content is delivered, with an online course costing less than a traditional, classroom course.

**Table 2. GPSTC Costs, LC 29 7716**

	One-Time Costs	Annual Costs
<b><u>Online Course</u></b>		
Course Development	\$5,196	
<u>Network Equipment</u>	<u>\$86,025</u>	
Total Online	\$91,221	
<b><u>Classroom Course</u></b>		
Four New Instructors (Salaries/Benefits)		\$348,072
Instructors’ Equipment/Software	\$9,546	
<u>Printing and Supplies</u>		<u>\$5,000</u>
Total Classroom	<u>\$9,546</u>	<u>\$353,073</u>

<sup>1</sup> Medicaid data indicates that first-year costs of children placed in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) are approximately \$18,200, while those that do not enter a NICU are \$2,900.

- **Online** – GPSTC officials indicated that many courses are delivered online and that this would be the preferred method. An online course would cost approximately \$91,000 in one-time costs. However, the network equipment would periodically need to be replaced, with GPSTC officials estimating a three-year lifespan. It should be noted that this estimate assumes that officers take the course once. If the course must be repeated, GPSTC would revise the course and the course development costs would be incurred again.
- **Classroom** – If the course is delivered in a classroom setting, GPSTC officials estimated one-time costs of \$9,546 and annual costs of \$353,073. Most of the annual costs are for the salaries and benefits of four additional instructors.

Other Affected Agencies

- **DJJ** – Agency officials indicated that they are compliant with the provisions of the bill, including the provision of feminine hygiene products, inmate search procedures, gender sensitivity training, and inmate housing location methods. The bill would not require DJJ to provide a nursery program.
- **POST** – Should any custodial agency modify training as a result of the bill, the Council would certify that the training requirements are being met. However, the Council routinely performs these activities and expected no additional expenditures as a result of the bill.
- **DPS** – Agency officials do not believe that the training provisions would apply to its officers, because they do not meet the definition of a custodian of an inmate (i.e., the agency does not operate a penal institution as defined by the bill). However, even if the training were provided to DPS officers, the agency stated that it would take place of a portion of currently funded training. As a result, no additional funding would be required.
- **GBI** – Agency officials indicated that the bill would have no fiscal impact. Like DPS, GBI agents do not appear to meet the definition of a custodian subject to the bill's training requirements.

Sincerely,



Greg S. Griffin  
State Auditor



Teresa A. MacCartney, Director  
Office of Planning and Budget