



DOAA

Georgia Department
of Audits & Accounts

Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor

March 6, 2026

Honorable Tyler Paul Smith
Chairman, House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee
401-K State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill 997 (LC 48 1811S)

Dear Chairman Smith:

The bill limits how long the state can hold offenders in a county facility prior to being transported to a state facility and requires the Department of Corrections (GDC) and the State Board of Pardons and Paroles (SBPP) to reimburse counties a minimum of \$30 per day for housing state inmates in county facilities. SBPP is also required to reimburse counties for medical services provided to parolees. The bill also prohibits courts from ordering GDC or Department of Community Supervision (DCS) policy from requiring that counties transport inmates to non-county facilities.

The bill would result in additional costs to GDC, DCS, and SBPP as discussed below.

- **Department of Corrections** – GDC would incur jail costs for housing offenders in county facilities after sentencing and for transporting the offenders to state facilities. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, additional costs to GDC would total between \$21.6 million and \$26.9 million annually, while one-time costs were estimated at \$5.8 to \$10.7 million.

As shown in **Table 1**, using FY 2026 data, we estimated that the additional cost of jail reimbursements to counties at \$13.3 million. Clerks currently have 30 days to notify GDC of a new sentence. Once the sentence is accepted, GDC has 15 days to assign the inmate and transfer custody. GDC currently pays \$30 for each day a sentenced offender remains at the local jail beginning on day 16 after accepting the sentence. The bill would require \$30 per day per offender reimbursement to counties beginning the day after sentencing. Because GDC currently pays \$30 per day reimbursement beginning day 46 (or 15 days after receiving notification of sentencing from the court), we assume no additional costs after day 45.

Table 1: GDC Estimate of Annual Costs for County Jail Reimbursements

Number Sentenced	Days in Jail	Cost Per Day	Costs
9,862	45	\$30	\$13,313,700

Note: GDC has a base budget of \$5,000 for reimbursements to locals in cases such as these.

As shown in **Table 2**, additional transportation results in one-time costs for the purchase of buses and vans, as well as annual costs for their operation and for additional transport officers. Sheriffs currently provide a portion of the transports of inmates from jails to GDC facilities. Under the bill, GDC would be responsible for all transport and would need to acquire additional vehicles and transport officers for the added trips.

Table 2: GDC Estimate of One-Time and Annual Costs for Inmate Transportation

	Low Estimate	High Estimate
One-Time Costs		
New Buses/Vans/Trail Vehicles	\$5,834,756	\$10,709,888
Annual Costs		
Transport Officers (78-128 FTEs)	\$7,943,958	\$13,036,239
Transport Regular Operating	<u>\$357,000</u>	<u>\$588,000</u>
Total Annual	\$8,300,958	\$13,624,239

One-time costs of \$5.8 million to \$10.7 million would be incurred for additional buses, vans, and trail vehicles. Based on information from GDC, the low estimate assumes one new bus, two vans, and three trail vehicles for each of the agency's eight regional transport hubs. The high estimate includes two new buses, three vans, and five trail vehicles for each hub. The totals assume that buses are \$462,039 each, vans are \$52,553 each, and trail vehicles are \$40,733 each. The estimates also include three ADA vans in the low estimate and four in the high estimate at \$106,668 each.

Annual costs of \$8.3 million to \$13.6 million are related to officers and the operating costs for vehicles. We assumed two transport officers for each bus or van, as well as one per trail vehicle. Officers have a starting salary of \$60,762 plus benefits. Finally, regular operating costs (i.e., fuel, maintenance, repairs) were estimated at approximately \$7,000 per vehicle.

- **Department of Community Supervision** –DCS currently relies on counties or other local law enforcement agencies to transfer probationers to their facilities in most cases. Because the bill would prohibit a court from ordering or agency policy from requiring local agencies to make these transports, DCS would incur additional costs for vehicles and their operation, as well as new staff. The costs are estimated at \$3.3 million annually, with one-time costs of \$1.3 million.

As shown in **Table 3**, transporting probationers to their facilities results in one-time costs for the purchase and modification of 26 vans to allow supervisee transport (vans would allow transport of multiple supervisees in one trip). The annual cost to fuel and maintain the vehicles is estimated at \$684,000, though the estimate assumes transport to the nearest GDC facility, which may not always have bed space. Other annual costs include \$2.6 million for 28 additional staff to ensure that transportation does not significantly reduce existing supervision responsibilities. The 26 transport officers would have a salary of \$55,083 plus benefits, while two supervisors would have a salary of \$73,315.45 plus benefits.

Table 3: DCS Estimate of One-Time and Annual Costs for Supervisee Transportation

	Transportation Costs
One-Time Costs	
Transport Vans and Modification (26)	\$1,331,200
Annual Costs	
Additional Officers (28 FTEs)	\$2,625,588
Transport Regular Operating	<u>\$683,942</u>
Total Annual	\$3,309,530

- State Board of Pardons and Paroles** – SBPP currently uses a \$15 per day county jail reimbursement rate for housing parolees, and reimbursement is made only for parolees held on a felony parole warrant issued by the Board. The bill would increase the daily rate and reimburse counties for parolees arrested on new charges. As shown in **Table 4**, reimbursing counties for housing parolees in county facilities would cost approximately \$9.4 million annually, plus \$135,025 in administrative costs for a Senior District Operations Manager (DOM) to review, investigate, and process the increase in jail subsidy invoices. One-time costs of \$43,730 would be incurred for a new vehicle, outfitting, uniform, and equipment for the additional employee.

It should be noted that this estimate does not include the cost of medical services provided to parolees. SBPP was unable to provide a reliable estimate for these costs, which are not included in SBPP's current appropriations. In 2009, SBPP was appropriated \$20,000 to pay medical reimbursements for parolees held on felony parole warrants. However, this funding was eliminated in FY 2010.

Table 4: SBPP Estimate of Costs for County Jail Reimbursements

Category	Annual Arrests	Avg Jail Days	Total Jail Days	Costs
One-Time Costs				
Vehicle, Uniform, Equipment				\$43,730
Annual Costs				
Felony Parole Warrants	151	24	3,624	\$108,720
Parolees with New Charges	<u>6,732</u>	46	<u>309,675</u>	<u>\$9,290,169</u>
Total Jail Costs	6,883	N/A	313,299	\$9,398,889
Additional Employee				<u>\$135,025</u>
Total Annual Costs				\$9,533,914

These estimates are based on available historical data on the number of offenders housed in county facilities and the length of stay, which is not tracked uniformly across each agency. Actual costs will be higher or lower if the number of offenders or the length of stay changes.

Respectfully,



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State Auditor



Richard Dunn, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/RD/jb