



MEDIA ACCESS AND TRANSPARENCY IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

S.1582, SEN. RAUSCH

DESCRIPTION

An Act relative to media access and transparency in correctional facilities would increase transparency in the correctional system by ensuring that media representatives have appropriate and reasonable access to visitation, telephone calls, and other communication with incarcerated people.



WHY THIS MATTERS

Correctional facilities in the Commonwealth operate largely outside of public scrutiny, and with little accountability. Although it is axiomatic that “sunlight is the best disinfectant”, news media representatives are currently unable to visit and communicate freely with incarcerated people. This lack of unencumbered access inhibits the critical function of journalism to provide the people of the Commonwealth with the information we need to make well informed decisions about our systems of incarceration and the impact those systems have on our communities.

IMPACT

An Act relative to media access and transparency in correctional facilities will:

- Provide news media representatives with visitation rights commensurate with rights of attorneys.
- Ensure that news media representatives are able to correspond confidentially and have confidential telephone communication with incarcerated people
- Provide news media representatives with the opportunity to furnish contact information to the Department of Correction and County Sheriffs, which will then be published on their websites and provided to incarcerated people upon entrance into any correctional facility
- Ensure that retaliation against an incarcerated person for communication with a news media representative is an offense punishable by disciplinary action.

CONTACT

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