

2022 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE BILL NO. 621

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 11, 2022

A *BILL to amend and reenact §§ 53.1-1.1 and 53.1-35.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to communication systems within state correctional facilities; free telephone calls and communication services.*

Patron—Kory

Committee Referral Pending

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 53.1-1.1 and 53.1-35.1 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 53.1-1.1. Telephone systems within correctional facilities.

The Department of Corrections shall offer debit or prepaid telephone systems, in addition to any existing collect calling systems, which provide telephone systems that allow telephone calls to be placed to the telephone number or numbers on an approved call list. Such telephone systems may be established with the lowest available rates shall be provided free of charge to any person receiving or initiating the telephone call.

§ 53.1-35.1. Electronic visitation and messaging with inmates; fees.

The Director is authorized to prescribe reasonable rules regarding electronic visitation systems or electronic messaging systems, including Voice-over-Internet Protocol technology and web-based communication systems, for communication between prisoners and third parties and collection of a fee for the system utilized. Any such communication service shall be provided free of charge to the person initiating or receiving the service. Any state correctional facility that utilizes such systems shall establish such system allowing for the security needs of the facility. Any state correctional facility that utilizes such system shall not prohibit in-person visitation.

This section does not apply to telephonic communication systems or to electronic video and audio communication systems used in judicial proceedings.

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