

S.F. No. 519 – Assistance to Inmates (Third Engrossment)

Author: Senator David J. Osmek

Prepared by: Alexis C. Stangl, Senate Counsel (651/296-4397)

Date: April 19, 2021

Section 1. Contents of application; other information. A person may use a valid Department of Corrections or Federal Bureau of Prisons ID card with the inmate’s full name, date of birth, and photograph to prove identity when applying for a state ID card, instruction permit, or driver’s license.

Section 2. Release of inmates; duties of commissioner. The commissioner of corrections is required to provide specified information and assistance to inmates. This section is effective September 1, 2021, except one provision relating to medical records is effective on July 1, 2022.

Subd. 1. Duties upon release. When releasing an inmate from prison, the commissioner must provide the inmate with specified information and assistance relating to the inmate’s criminal history, court-ordered payments owed by the inmate upon release, medical records, the right to vote, local career workforce centers, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The commissioner must also provide assistance in obtaining a social security card.

Subd. 2. Assistance relating to birth certificates and identification cards. Upon request of an eligible inmate, the commissioner must assist the inmate in obtaining a free copy of the inmate’s birth certificate and a free state identification card.

Subd. 3. Medical assistance or MinnesotaCare application. At least 45 days before the scheduled release of an inmate, the commissioner must offer to assist and assist an inmate in applying for medical assistance or MinnesotaCare.

Subd. 4. Medications. When releasing an inmate from prison, the commissioner must supply the inmate with a one-month supply of non-narcotic medications that have been prescribed to the inmate, along with a prescription for two 30-day refills.

Subd. 5. Exception; release violators. Subdivisions 1-3 do not apply to inmates who are being imprisoned for a release violation. 2

Section 3. Homelessness mitigation plan; annual reporting on homelessness. The commissioner of corrections must implement a homelessness mitigation plan for individuals released from prison. The commissioner must submit the plan to the legislature by October 31, 2022. Starting in 2022, the commissioner must report annually to the legislature regarding the number of inmates released to homelessness. The reports starting in 2024 and ending in 2033 must include information on the implementation of the homelessness mitigation plan.