

(Continued)

grams designed to reduce recidivism and break what she called "an intergenerational pattern" of criminal behavior that "involves several members of the family at a given time."

"...We encourage policy makers to carefully examine Senate Bill 671, The Community Corrections Act."

SB671, which died in committee last May, would have provided for the creation of a criminal diversion docket in certain instances and would have authorized the courts to impose a punishment as an alternative to incarceration in certain instances.

The proposal was authored by Senator Bruce Price, D-Hinton, and Representative Jack Bonny, D-Burns Flat.

"As the act is now designed, it would specifically address many of the problems that we have discussed this morning," Tinker said.

"...In terms of desired outcomes," Tinker said, "if a person can be adequately controlled and reformed in the community, it is much more human to try to keep him or her connected to family."

FROM: SHAWN ASHLEY

DATE: 03/06/96

## RESOLUTION COULD IMPACT OVERCROWDING IF FUNDED

■(GIT) A concurrent resolution introduced Wednesday could help the Department of Corrections deal with its overcrowding problem — if it is ultimately funded.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 47, authored by Senator Gene Stipe, D-McAlester, and Representative Bill Smith, D-Ringling, directs the DOC to solicit competitive proposals from private prison contractors for the design, financing, siting, construction and operation of two 500-bed medium security prisons.

"By the end of fiscal year 1997," DOC spokesman Jerry Massey said, "we are going to need to lease around 3,500 beds."

The question, however, is whether lawmakers would agree to provide the funding necessary to lease prison space.

Massey said proposals for the use of private prison space, such as Stipe and Smith's resolution, appear to be the best way for the corrections department to deal with its immediate growth.

"The advantage of private prisons and private construction is that they're not bound by the purchasing regulations we are," Massey explained. "That means they can build a facility more quickly."

Massey estimated that it would take the department from two to three years to construct a facility one 500-bed facility, while a private contractor could probably build the same facility in a year or less.

Some 13,160 inmates are currently housed in DOC facilities in Oklahoma, including 250 who are being held in the condemned east cellhouse at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester. That's 196 inmates above the crisis operation population limit and 2,527 above the State Board of Correction's legal population.

An additional 554 inmates are housed in private prisons in Texas. Approximately 340 inmates are backed up in county jails across the state, Massey said, waiting for bedspace to become available.

FROM: SHAWN ASHLEY

DATE: 03/07/96