

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1140

Introduced by Assembly Member Connolly

February 20, 2025

An act to add Section 2069 to the Penal Code, relating to prisons.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1140, as introduced, Connolly. Single-Occupancy Cell Pilot Program.

Existing law establishes the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and sets forth its powers and duties regarding the administration of correctional facilities and the care and custody of inmates. Existing law vests in the Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation the supervision, management, and control of the state prisons, and the responsibility for the care, custody, treatment, training, discipline, and employment of persons confined in the state prisons.

This bill, the Single-Occupancy Cell Pilot Program of 2026, would require the Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to develop and implement a pilot program to house people who are incarcerated at 4 adult prison facilities in single-occupancy cells by January 1, 2027. The bill would require the secretary to select the 4 facilities and establish criteria to determine who will be housed in single-occupancy cells. The bill would require the pilot program to apply to 10% of the population housed at each of the 4 facilities. The bill would require the secretary, by March 15, 2028, to transmit a publicly available report to the Governor and the Legislature detailing specified information pertaining to the pilot program, including the number of incarcerated persons housed in single-cell occupancy cells

under the pilot program and participating in education assignments by facility, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.

State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (a) It is the intent of the Legislature that the California
4 corrections system promote, to the best extent, increased public
5 safety by reducing recidivism through community-based
6 corrections programs and evidence-based practice.

7 (b) (1) To properly be able to engage in rehabilitative
8 programming offered by the Department of Corrections and
9 Rehabilitation, incarcerated persons must be able to sleep without
10 fear of physical harm.

11 (2) A study examining 568 male prisoners noted a statistically
12 significant mean increase in systolic blood pressure (SBP) when
13 they were moved from single-occupancy cells to
14 multiple-occupancy dormitories (D'Atri, et al., Crowding in Prison:
15 The Relationship Between Changes in Housing Mode and Blood
16 Pressure (1981) 43 (2) Psychosomatic Medicine, pp. 95-105). For
17 those who remained in a single cell, the study noted little mean
18 change in SBP. Rises in SBP are associated with stress and can
19 lead to other health complications like heart disease.

20 (3) Sleep deprivation is linked to decreased mood and can
21 undermine emotional capacity or the ability to experience positive
22 emotions like joy, happiness, and contentment. In addition to
23 blunting these emotions, sleep deprivation increases anxiety
24 (Palmer, et al., Sleep Loss and Emotion: A Systematic Review
25 and Meta-analysis of Over 50 Years of Experimental Research
26 (2024) 150 (4) Psychological Bulletin, pp. 440-463). When
27 individuals are in a state of anxiety, they function from a
28 heightened amygdala, which places a person in a state of "fight or
29 flight."

30 (4) Moreover, sleep deprivation degrades normal reciprocal
31 associations, which means that it impairs a person's ability to read
32 simple and complex social cues that can result in misreading of
33 perceived threats. Individuals who have restful sleep (i.e., those

able to engage in REM sleep) were able to have a next-day improvement in emotional discrimination. This highlights the psychological and physiological importance of restorative sleep (Goldstein-Piekarski, et al., Sleep Deprivation Impairs the Human Central and Peripheral Nervous System Discrimination of Social Threat (2015) 35 (28) The Journal of Neuroscience, pp. 10135-10145).

(5) While there are studies that show a correlation between an increased risk of suicide and single-occupancy cells, that correlation may be linked to who was placed in single cells (i.e., violent persons or persons with severe mental health issues) and the purpose for this solitary placement (Fazel, et al., Suicide in Prisons: An International Study of Prevalance and Contributory Factors (2017) 4 (12) 4 Lancet Psychiatry, pp. 946-952). This act recommends that single-occupancy cells be used as a reward and preference to promote healing, not to inflict punishment.

(c) Violence among those in prison in shared housing is an ongoing issue that jeopardizes the safety of both incarcerated persons and correctional staff. As has been reported, an overflow of people in prisons increases stress between those confined and correctional officers. This has historically led to increased violence and poor conduct between correctional officers and people who are incarcerated. Reductions in overcrowding and turnover appear critical in reducing vulnerability for people who are incarcerated (Baggio, et al., Do Overcrowding and Turnover Cause Violence in Prison? (2020) 10 Front. Psychiatry 1015, <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychiatry/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2019.01015/full>).

(d) To best position incarcerated persons to engage in rehabilitative programming and to promote public safety by reducing recidivism, while simultaneously ensuring better safety and security for correctional staff, it is the intent of the Legislature that the Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation implement a plan to begin housing more incarcerated persons in single-occupancy cells.

SEC. 2. This act shall be known, and may be cited, as the “Single-Occupancy Cell Pilot Program of 2026.”

SEC. 3. Section 2069 is added to the Penal Code, to read:

2069. (a) The Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation shall develop and implement a pilot program to house persons who are incarcerated at four adult prison facilities

1 in single-occupancy cells by January 1, 2027. The secretary, or
2 their designee, shall establish criteria to determine which people,
3 who are incarcerated, will be housed in single-occupancy cells.
4 The four facilities participating in the pilot program shall be
5 determined by the secretary.

6 (b) At a minimum, the pilot program shall do both of the
7 following:

8 (1) Be implemented at four facilities housing incarcerated adults
9 under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and
10 Rehabilitation, excluding medical facilities and state hospitals.

11 (2) Apply to 10 percent of the population housed at each of the
12 four-designated facilities.

13 (c) The secretary shall transmit a publicly available report to
14 the Legislature and Governor by March 15, 2028, detailing all of
15 the following related to the four facilities designated to be
16 participating in the pilot program, to be known as “pilot sites”:

17 (1) The capacity of the pilot sites as of December 31, 2026, and
18 December 31, 2027. As used in this subdivision, “capacity”
19 includes the rated capacity, operational capacity, and design
20 capacity of the facility. The report shall include capacity numbers
21 for rated capacity, operational capacity, and design capacity.

22 (2) The number of incarcerated persons housed in
23 single-occupancy cells under the pilot program at the four pilot
24 sites.

25 (3) The number of incarcerated persons participating in work
26 assignments by facility at the four pilot sites on December 31,
27 2026.

28 (4) The number of incarcerated persons participating in
29 education assignments by facility at the four pilot sites on
30 December 31, 2026.

31 (5) The number of incarcerated persons participating in treatment
32 and reentry program assignments by facility at the four pilot sites
33 on December 31, 2026.

34 (6) The number of incarcerated persons participating in work
35 assignments by facility at the four pilot sites on December 31,
36 2027.

37 (7) The number of incarcerated persons participating in
38 education assignments by facility at the four pilot sites on
39 December 31, 2027.

1 (8) The number of incarcerated persons participating in treatment
2 and reentry program assignments by facility at the four pilot sites
3 on December 31, 2027.

4 (9) The numbers produced under paragraphs (2) through (8),
5 inclusive, shall also include the housing classification for
6 incarcerated persons participating in the assignments by facility.

7 (10) (A) The number of disciplinary incidents and incidents
8 involving violence that occurred by facility for each of the four
9 pilot sites overall and disaggregated by single-occupancy and
10 non-single-occupancy cells and rehabilitative programming.

11 (B) The reporting requirement under subparagraph (A) shall
12 include a breakdown of disciplinary incidents and incidents
13 involving violence by facility and month for the first year that the
14 pilot program is operational.

15 (11) The inclusion or exclusion criteria, or both, the secretary,
16 or their designee, used to designate incarcerated persons to
17 single-occupancy cells, by facility.

18 (12) A qualitative description of the changes made in each of
19 the four pilot sites in order to implement this pilot program.

20 (d) The secretary, or their designee, shall not deem the following
21 to qualify towards the percentage of the pilot site's population
22 required to be housed in single-occupancy cells:

23 (1) Persons housed in safety cells.

24 (2) Persons housed in detoxification cells.

25 (3) Persons housed in temporary holding cells or rooms.

26 (e) If an incarcerated person requests to be housed in a pilot site
27 and the secretary, or their designee, denies the inmate's request
28 for that housing, that denial shall not constitute a cognizable cause
29 of action.

30 (f) A report to be submitted pursuant to subdivision (c) shall be
31 submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government
32 Code.