



Restore Jail Per Diem to FY11 Levels

Per diem payments haven't changed in 12 years. Operating costs have increased, it's time to increase these payments!

Amendments

- HB30: [Item 73#1h](#) (Brewer)
- SB30: [Item 73#3s](#) (Petersen) and [Item 73#4s](#) (Deeds)

Background

- While state per diems are between \$4 to \$12 per day, the average operating cost per inmate per day in FY20 was \$100.32 (operating costs are generally higher in sheriff-operated local jails and lower in regional jails)
- In FY20, localities spent \$605.1 million in operating and capital costs for jails and jail farms; the state through the Compensation Board contributed \$362.1 million.
- Other state funding (mostly grants) was down in FY20 compared to FY19 (\$2.6 million vs. \$4.9 million).
- In FY20, the Commonwealth's portion of costs funded as a percentage of expenditures was 34.7 percent, down from 35.05 percent in FY19 and 36.3 percent in FY18.

What the proposed amendments would accomplish

Each of these proposed amendments would increase the per diem paid to local and regional jails for local responsible inmates from \$4 to \$8 per day, and from \$18 to \$22 for inmates housed and maintained in a jail farm not under the control of the sheriff. This returns the per diem rate to that which was in place prior to the reduction in 2010.

- Costs to maintain state responsible inmates in local and regional jails have increased since 2010 but state per diems have remained frozen.
- While there is no requirement in the Code or Appropriations Act to adjust per diem rates for inflation (there should be one), inflation is recognized in other areas of the budget, such as the Standards of Quality.
- State revenues have fully recovered from the Great Recession and remain robust; there is no reason why the state cannot at least bring per diem payments back to the 2010 level.

Why VML supports these amendments

Local governments have received diminished state per diem payments for jails since 2010, when the state reduced payments in response to the Great Recession. It's 12 years later: operating costs have risen for jails; the state's economic landscape has greatly improved; per diem payments haven't changed.

VML Contact: Janet Areson, jareson@vml.org