



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 15, 2009

Senator David Pearce's Bill Regulating Private Jails Signed by Governor

JEFFERSON CITY—The state's two private jails will soon be subject to stiffer regulations after a bill sponsored by Senator David Pearce (R-Warrensburg) was signed by the governor on Monday (7/13). Representative Denny Hoskins (R-121) handled SB 44 in the House.

[Senate Bill 44](#) addresses safety concerns posed by the lack of certain regulations at privately owned jails in Missouri. Senator Pearce's legislation brings the policies of private jails in line with those owned and maintained by cities, counties and the state.

"The need for this bill was highlighted after two inmates escaped from a private jail in Johnson County last year," Sen. Pearce said. "The jail wasn't required to notify law enforcement of the escape, so the incident went unreported for several hours. This unacceptable policy put our local communities at risk."

In addition to requiring private jails to immediately notify law enforcement in the event a prisoner has escaped, SB 44 creates the crime of escaping from a private jail. The bill also requires private jails to arrange for any necessary health care for inmates; separate prisoners by gender and type of cause for imprisonment (civil versus criminal); and provide adequate clothing, food and bedding to prisoners.

"I am pleased the governor recognized the importance of regulating these private jails and signed my bill," Sen. Pearce said. "The lack of regulation was troubling and it compromised the safety of area residents. Now we are on the right track toward making private jails as secure as our public jails."

"I was glad we were able to pass this legislation for the safety of Johnson County residents," Rep. Hoskins said.

Senate Bill 44 officially becomes law August 28.

###

Contact: Matt Michelson
(573) 751-2272