



SENATOR DAVE CORTESE

SB 553 – CDCR Clearance

SUMMARY

To enhance efficiency and access to California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) facilities, SB 553 will grant short-term clearance to specified officials without the need for a formal application process.

BACKGROUND

Currently, there are three existing clearance levels including short-term clearance, annual program provider clearance, and statewide program provider clearance. Each level of clearance provides various levels of access to facilities from three day entry to one facility, to unlimited accessibility to any state correctional site. However, these clearance levels are only available upon application by community based organization program providers.

CDCR requires individuals seeking access into prisons to go through a formal clearance application process for each individual facility they wish to enter. This process, while essential for ensuring safety and security, creates administrative burdens, logistical barriers, and delays for CDCR, state officials, and legal professionals when attempting to enter facilities. The clearance process not only strains resources for already overburdened Community Resource Manager (CRM) staff, but also hinders the oversight capabilities of California's leadership, legislators, and judiciary members who play a direct role in shaping policy, implementing legislation, and making informed judicial decisions related to corrections.

THIS BILL

SB 553 will grant clearance to specified officials without the need for a formal application process. This clearance would be available upon request to the following:

- The Governor and all Cabinet members

- Members of the Legislature and their staff
- Retired judges of the State of California
- Legal professionals

These individuals would be authorized for short-term entrance to a facility based on their official roles and responsibilities without needing to undergo standard clearance application procedures each time, and legal professionals will have access for up to a year. This solution promotes seamless access while upholding security protocols, as these individuals are already trusted public servants engaged in official state business.

This bill encourages a porous prison atmosphere which aligns with California's goals of promoting a more humane environment conducive to rehabilitation and successful reentry.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jewel Corral (she/her)
Office of Senator Dave Cortese
Jewel.Corral@sen.ca.gov | (916) 651-4015