

HB 1585 -- PAROLE HEARINGS

SPONSOR: Hill

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Corrections by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Judiciary by a vote of 9 to 1.

Currently, the use of videoconferencing must not be used if the offender, the victim, or the victim's family objects. This bill removes the offender from the list of individuals who can object. The bill also removes the requirement that the parole board conduct a personal interview with the offender, permitting the interview to be conducted via videoconferencing.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill would allow the department to come into the 21st century and utilize technology for these communications. The department would save a lot of money if they could conduct these hearings using technology; they wouldn't have to transport the inmate and utilize staff resources involved in transporting an inmate. Currently, they use videoconferencing, but the inmate can object and demand an in-person hearing, and if the inmate so demands, they must acquiesce. If there is an offender with mental health issues, they do not use videoconferencing.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hill and Ellis McSwain, Probation And Parole.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.