

SENATE BILL 617

By Akbari

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37,
relative to the department of children's services.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, Chapter 5, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) The department shall make chaplain services available on a regular basis to juveniles who are in the department's custody and housed in a juvenile detention facility approved, certified, or licensed by the department, including youth development centers.

(b) The department shall not require a juvenile to attend or make use of the chaplain services.

(c) As used in this section, "chaplain services" includes, but is not limited to, religious services performed by a minister of the gospel, priest of the Catholic Church, rector of the Episcopal Church, ordained rabbi, or regular minister of religion of any religious organization or denomination usually referred to as a church.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, Chapter 5, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

The department shall provide training to all persons employed by the department as youth service officers on best practices for behavior management and conflict resolution in the context of supervision of juvenile justice youth. The training must be conducted annually.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, Chapter 5, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

Children sixteen (16) years of age or older who have been committed to the department for a determinate period of time and are retained in a Level III or Level IV juvenile detention facility approved, certified, or licensed by the department, including youth development centers, shall be housed, educated, and maintained separately from children less than sixteen (16) years of age at all times.

SECTION 4. This act takes effect July 1, 2023, the public welfare requiring it.