

Senators Cropsey and Kuipers offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 225.

A resolution to urge the Michigan Department of Corrections to implement nondenominational prison congregation programs within our prisons.

Whereas, Michigan citizens face a higher rate of victimization than the people of any of our neighboring Great Lake states. Many of these violent offenses are committed by individuals who have previously been convicted of a crime. The continual prison influx of previous offenders has resulted in almost 60 percent of the yearly prison intake constituting felons in the community who are sent to prison due to parole violations, probation violations, or committing a new offense; and

Whereas, Our responsibility for the public safety of Michigan's citizens requires us, as a state, to find ways to reduce the victimization of citizenry. Developing a successful prisoner reform program to help incarcerated individuals become less inclined to re-offend by giving former offenders a stake in our communities and making our communities part of the solution will bridge the wide gap between prison life and our society as a whole; and

Whereas, One model of reaching out to prisoners is the prison congregation concept. In these programs, community churches partner with prisoners to create joint prison/community congregations. Members of a church in the community worship with prisoners inside the institution and provide additional spiritual and practical assistance to the prisoners. Such programs give the prisoner a stake in the community to which they will be released and prepare the prisoner for life after serving their sentence. By integrating a prisoner into a church community, the prisoner takes a giant step toward becoming a member of the entire community and reducing recidivism; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we urge the Michigan Department of Corrections to implement nondenominational prison congregation programs within our prisons; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Michigan Department of Corrections.