



The South Dakota Department of Corrections became a state government agency on July 1, 1989. Up until that time, the Board of Charities and Corrections oversaw the state prison system as well as the Human Services Center, Custer State Hospital, Redfield State Hospital and School, State Veterans Home, State Training School, Youth Forestry Camp and Lamont Youth Development Center.

But Governor George S. Mickelson pushed for major changes in his first year in office, creating a Commission on Corrections to study prison overcrowding, develop programs to assist offenders returning to society from incarceration, and create early prevention programs for juvenile offenders. Among the recommendations of the Commission was a call to separate control of the state's correctional facilities and charitable institutions. A series of various legislative proposals, a public vote on a proposed amendment to the state Constitution, the transition from Board oversight and the creation of a brand new state agency followed.

The timeline below provides an overview of some of the events that led to the department's creation.

1987- Commission on Corrections recommends that the state disband the Board of Charities and Corrections and create new state agencies to manage state correctional facilities and charitable institutions.

1988- House Joint Resolution 1001 proposed submitting an amendment to Article XIV of the state Constitution to voters during that year's general election. HJR 1001 included a section stating "The charitable and penal institutions of the state of South Dakota shall consist of a penitentiary, a hospital for the mentally ill, a school for the developmentally disabled, and a reform school for juveniles." The proposal effectively eliminated the Board of Charities and Corrections, thus creating the Department of Corrections as well as the Department of Human Services.

On November 8, 1988, voters approved Amendment D by a 171,282 (59%) to 121,410 (41%) margin.

Amendment D was definitely not the high profile ballot measure that year. George H.W. Bush prevailed over Michael Dukakis in the race for the White House that same day and state voters also approved Amendment B, which revised Article III, section 25 of the state constitution to permit gambling in the City of Deadwood. That measure passed by a 191,745 to 106,444 margin.

1989- Senate Bill 131 abolished the Board of Charities and Corrections, created a Department of Corrections and an advisory board made up of five members to be appointed by the Governor to review issues and policies affecting the department for a three year period. Most of the statutes regarding rule making authority, prison industries and certain provisions impacting the State Penitentiary were also revised in SB 131. The bill consisted of 182 sections.

Senate Bill 97 established an interim oversight committee on correctional issues that included legislative monitoring of the reorganization.

Both bills were approved by the state Legislature and signed into law by Governor Mickelson.

The final meeting of the Board of Charities and Corrections was held in Pierre on June 21.

On July 1, 1989, the Department of Corrections officially became a state agency. Lynne DeLano was appointed as the first Secretary of Corrections.