

By: Allen, et al.

H.B. No. 967

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to program accessibility for female inmates of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 501.027, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 501.027. ACCESS TO PROGRAMS BY FEMALE INMATES. (a) The department shall develop and implement policies that increase and promote a female inmate's access to programs, including parenting classes and educational, vocational, substance use treatment, rehabilitation, life skills training, and prerelease programs, offered to inmates in the custody of the department, including programs offered to defendants confined in state jail felony facilities [~~including educational, vocational, substance use treatment, rehabilitation, life skills training, and prerelease programs~~]. The department may not reduce or limit a male inmate's access to a program to meet the requirements of this section.

(b) The department shall develop and implement policies that:

(1) require each facility to make the programs described by Subsection (a) available and accessible to a female inmate not later than the 45th day after the date the inmate arrives at the facility;

1 (2) ensure female inmates have access to program
2 opportunities, including master's level education courses, that
3 are equitable to the program opportunities that are provided to
4 male inmates; and

5 (3) ensure that vocational programs and any related
6 certifications are substantively relevant to current workforce
7 demands and opportunities.

8 (c) Not later than December 31 of each year, the department
9 shall:

10 (1) prepare and submit to the governor, the lieutenant
11 governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, each
12 standing committee of the legislature having primary jurisdiction
13 over the department, and the reentry task force described by
14 Section 501.098 a written report that includes:

15 (A) a description of any department policies that
16 were created, modified, or eliminated during the preceding year to
17 meet the requirements of this section; and

18 (B) a list of programs available to female
19 inmates in the custody of the department during the preceding year;
20 and

21 (2) publish the report on the department's Internet
22 website.

23 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date
24 of this Act, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice shall develop
25 and implement the policies necessary to implement the changes in
26 law made by this Act.

27 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.