

By: Lewis

H.B. No. 2927

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the implementation of a project for reintegration of offenders into the labor force.

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

SECTION 1. Section 306.005, Labor Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 306.005. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING--CONTENTS. (a) The memorandum of understanding between the department and the commission must establish the role of:

(1) the institutional division and the state jail division in ascertaining and encouraging an inmate's chances for employment by:

(A) providing vocational and educational assessment for the person while incarcerated;

(B) developing a skills enhancement program for the person while incarcerated, in cooperation with other governmental, educational, and private entities, using available public or private financial resources authorized by statute; ~~and~~

(C) referring the person on release to the project through the person's parole officer or supervision officer; and

(D) assigning to the person a licensed social worker employed under Section 501.098 or 507.033, Government Code, to coordinate with applicable local workforce development boards to

1 encourage and monitor the progress of the person with respect to the
2 project;

3 (2) the community justice assistance division and the
4 pardons and paroles division of the department in:

5 (A) encouraging and referring persons to the
6 project; and

7 (B) ensuring that those persons participate in
8 the project and avail themselves of its services; and

9 (3) the commission in developing and maintaining a
10 statewide network for finding positions of employment that require
11 the skills possessed by project participants and in helping those
12 participants to secure employment.

13 (b) The memorandum of understanding between the Texas Youth
14 Commission and the commission must establish the roles of the
15 institutional and community services division in the Texas Youth
16 Commission and the role of the commission in the same manner the
17 roles of the department and commission are established under
18 Subsection (a), except that the Texas Youth Commission is not
19 required to employ or assign a licensed social worker as described
20 by Subsection (a)(1)(D).

21 SECTION 2. Section 306.007(a), Labor Code, is amended to
22 read as follows:

23 (a) To assist in the reintegration into the labor force of
24 persons formerly sentenced to the institutional division or the
25 state jail division, the commission through Project RIO shall
26 provide:

27 (1) to those persons:

1 (A) information from local workforce development
2 boards on job training and employment referral services;

3 (B) information from the Texas Commission on
4 Alcohol and Drug Abuse on substance abuse treatment services;

5 (C) information from the Texas Department of
6 Housing and Community Affairs on housing services;

7 (D) information from the Texas Veterans
8 Commission on services for veterans; ~~and~~

9 (E) information from the Texas Department of
10 Human Services on tax refund voucher programs under Subchapter D,
11 Chapter 31, Human Resources Code; and

12 (F) other information associated with a
13 successful reintegration of those persons into the labor force,
14 including information regarding counseling and spiritual resources
15 available in the community; and

16 (2) to the employers and potential employers of those
17 persons:

18 (A) information from the Texas Department of
19 Economic Development ~~[Commerce]~~ on the enterprise zone program and
20 smart jobs fund program; and

21 (B) information from local workforce development
22 boards on services listed in Section 2308.304, Government Code.

23 SECTION 3. Subchapter C, Chapter 501, Government Code, is
24 amended by adding Section 501.098 to read as follows:

25 Sec. 501.098. LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS PARTICIPATING IN
26 PROJECT RIO. The institutional division shall employ a sufficient
27 number of social workers licensed under Chapter 505, Occupations

1 Code, to participate in the project for reintegration of offenders
2 into the labor force as described by Chapter 306, Labor Code.

3 SECTION 4. Subchapter B, Chapter 507, Government Code, is
4 amended by adding Section 507.033 to read as follows:

5 Sec. 507.033. LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS PARTICIPATING IN
6 PROJECT RIO. The state jail division shall employ a sufficient
7 number of social workers licensed under Chapter 505, Occupations
8 Code, to participate in the project for reintegration of offenders
9 into the labor force as described by Chapter 306, Labor Code.

10 SECTION 5. The change in law made by this Act applies only
11 to a person who is discharged or released from confinement or
12 imprisonment on or after the effective date of this Act.

13 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect January 1, 2004.