

By: Allen of Dallas

H.B. No. 2837

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the state's activities regarding education, vocational training, and reintegration of offenders.

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

SECTION 1. Section 19.004(c), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) The district shall:

(1) develop educational ~~[and vocational training]~~ programs specifically designed for persons eligible under Section 19.005 and ensure that those programs, such as GED and ESL, are integrated with an applied vocational context leading to employment;

(1-a) develop vocational training programs specifically designed for persons eligible under Section 19.005 and prioritize the programs that result in certification or licensure, considering the impact that a previous felony conviction has on the ability to secure certification, licensure, and employment; and

(2) coordinate educational programs and services in the department with those provided by other state agencies, by political subdivisions, and by persons who provide programs and services under contract.

SECTION 2. Chapter 19, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 19.0041 to read as follows:

Sec. 19.0041. EVALUATION OF TRAINING SERVICES. (a) To

1 evaluate the effectiveness of training services provided to persons
2 confined or imprisoned in the department, the Windham School
3 District shall consult with the Legislative Budget Board to compile
4 and analyze information for each person who receives the training
5 services. This information shall include an evaluation of:

6 (1) the kind of training services provided;

7 (2) the kind of employment the person obtains on
8 release;

9 (3) whether the employment was related to training;

10 (4) the difference between the amount of the person's
11 earnings on the date employment is obtained following release and
12 the amount of those earnings on the first anniversary of that date;
13 and

14 (5) the retention factors associated with the
15 employment.

16 (b) The Legislative Budget Board shall submit an annual
17 report to the legislature and the governor's office based on data
18 compiled and analyzed under Subsection (a).

19 SECTION 3. Section 19.011, Education Code, is amended to
20 read as follows:

21 Sec. 19.011. COORDINATION WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES. (a)
22 In order to achieve the goals stated in Section 19.003, the district
23 with the cooperation of the Health and Human Services Commission,
24 the Texas Workforce Investment Council, the Texas Workforce
25 Commission, the Texas [Department of] Economic Development and
26 Tourism Office, and the department shall provide persons confined
27 or imprisoned in the department:

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

3 (2) information on the tax refund voucher program
4 under Subchapter H, Chapter 301, Labor Code.

5 (b) The district shall ~~[may]~~ coordinate vocational
6 education and job training programs with a local workforce
7 development board authorized by the Texas Workforce Commission to
8 ensure that district students are equipped with the skills
9 necessary to compete for current and emerging jobs ~~[Investment~~
10 ~~Council]~~.

11 SECTION 4. Sections 306.001(2) and (4), Labor Code, are
12 amended to read as follows:

13 (2) "Correctional institutions ~~[Institutional]~~
14 division" means the correctional institutions ~~[institutional]~~
15 division of the department.

16 ~~[(4) "State jail division" means the state jail~~
17 ~~division of the department.]~~

18 SECTION 5. Section 306.002, Labor Code, is amended to read
19 as follows:

20 Sec. 306.002. PROJECT RIO. The project for reintegration
21 of offenders is a statewide employment referral program designed to
22 reintegrate into the labor force persons sentenced to ~~[a state jail~~
23 ~~felony facility or]~~ the correctional institutions ~~[institutional]~~
24 division or ~~[and persons]~~ committed to the Texas Youth Commission.

25 SECTION 6. Section 306.005(a), Labor Code, is amended to
26 read as follows:

27 (a) The memorandum of understanding between the department

1 and the commission must establish the role of:

2 (1) the correctional institutions [~~institutional~~]
3 division [~~and the state jail division~~] in ascertaining and
4 encouraging an inmate's chances for employment by:

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

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

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

13 (2) the community justice assistance division and the
14 parole [~~pardons and paroles~~] division of the department in:

15 (A) encouraging and referring persons to the
16 project; and

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

19 (3) the commission in developing and maintaining a
20 statewide network for finding positions of employment that require
21 the skills possessed by project participants and in helping those
22 participants to secure employment.

23 SECTION 7. Section 306.007, Labor Code, is amended to read
24 as follows:

25 Sec. 306.007. PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON STATE SERVICES
26 FOR EX-OFFENDERS AND EMPLOYERS. (a) To assist in the reintegration
27 into the labor force of persons formerly sentenced to the

1 correctional institutions [~~institutional~~] division or committed to
2 the Texas Youth Commission [~~state jail division~~], the commission
3 through Project RIO shall provide:

4 (1) to those persons:

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

7 (B) information from the Department of State
8 Health Services [~~Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse~~] on
9 substance abuse treatment services;

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

12 (D) information from the Texas Veterans
13 Commission on services for veterans; and

14 (E) information on tax refund voucher programs
15 under Subchapter H, Chapter 301; and

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

18 (A) information from the Texas [~~Department of~~
19 Economic Development and Tourism Office on the enterprise zone
20 program; and

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

23 (b) The commission shall adopt a memorandum of
24 understanding with each of the following agencies that establishes
25 the respective responsibilities of the commission and the agencies
26 in providing information described by Subsection (a) to persons
27 formerly sentenced to the institutional division or the state jail

1 division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, to employers
2 or potential employers of those persons, and to local workforce
3 development boards:

4 (1) the Department of State Health Services [~~Texas~~
5 ~~Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse~~];

6 (2) the Texas Department of Housing and Community
7 Affairs;

8 (3) the Texas Veterans Commission; and

9 (4) the Health and [~~Texas Department of~~] Human
10 Services Commission [~~+~~

11 [~~(5) the Texas Department of Economic Development,~~
12 ~~and~~

13 [~~(6) the Texas Workforce Investment Council.~~

14 [~~(c) The commission shall coordinate the development of the~~
15 ~~memoranda of understanding and shall prepare an annual report~~
16 ~~describing the number of ex-offenders in the preceding year~~
17 ~~receiving services under each memorandum. The commission shall~~
18 ~~file a copy of the annual report with the governor's office].~~

19 SECTION 8. Chapter 306, Labor Code, is amended by adding
20 Section 306.008 to read as follows:

21 Sec. 306.008. DATA SHARING. (a) To assist in the
22 reintegration into the labor force of persons formerly sentenced to
23 the correctional institutions division or committed to the Texas
24 Youth Commission, the commission, the Texas Youth Commission, and
25 the department shall establish a data interface that, at a minimum,
26 provides to the commission:

27 (1) detailed information about persons released from a

1 correctional facility who might benefit from post-release Project
2 RIO services, including:

3 (A) demographic and identifying information;

4 (B) the person's address on release;

5 (C) a comprehensive state offense history,
6 including the date of release from the correctional facility,
7 sentence discharge date, and conditions of parole;

8 (D) assessment information;

9 (E) educational and work history;

10 (F) information related to participation in the
11 work against recidivism program operated by the department's
12 manufacturing and logistics division under the Texas Correctional
13 Industries office; and

14 (G) other services provided under this title
15 before release from the correctional facility; and

16 (2) referral information from the department and the
17 Texas Youth Commission necessary to implement the provision of
18 post-release employment services.

19 (b) The data interface established under Subsection (a)
20 must be designed to provide to a person's supervising officer on
21 release information about the person's participation in employment
22 services and entry into the workforce.

23 (c) Information received from the Texas Youth Commission
24 under this section is confidential and is not subject to disclosure
25 under Chapter 552, Government Code.

26 SECTION 9. This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.