

By: Allen of Dallas

H.B. No. 2837

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the state's activities regarding the 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. In the development of vocational training programs, the
district shall prioritize those that result in certification or
licensure, with consideration afforded to the impact that ex-felon
status has on the ability to secure such certification, licensure
and employment;

(2) ensure that education programs, such as GED and
ESL, are integrated with an applied vocational context leading to
employment; and

(3) [~~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 as follows:

Sec. 19.0041. EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING

1 SERVICES. (a) To evaluate the effectiveness of training services,
2 the Windham School District shall contract with an outside
3 organization to compile and analyze information for each offender
4 who received training while incarcerated. This information shall
5 include:

6 (1) the types or training provided;

7 (2) the types of employment secured upon release;

8 (3) whether such employment was training related;

9 (4) the measurement of an offender's earnings change
10 at 12 months from the initial wages paid upon securing employment;
11 and

12 (5) the retention factors associated with such
13 employment.

14 (b) The department shall submit an annual report to the
15 Legislative Budget Board and the Governor evaluating the
16 effectiveness of training services. This report shall be produced
17 by the outside organization the district contracted with under
18 Subsection (a) based on its data compilation and analysis.

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

21 (a) In order to achieve the goals stated in Section 19.003,
22 the district with the cooperation of the Health and Human Services
23 Commission, the Texas Workforce Investment Council, the Texas
24 Workforce Commission, the Governor's Economic Development and
25 Tourism Office, [~~the Texas Department of Economic Development,~~] and
26 the department shall provide persons confined or imprisoned in the
27 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
8 ~~[Investment Council]~~ to ensure that district students are equipped
9 with the skills necessary to compete for current and emerging jobs.

10 SECTION 4. Section 306.001, Labor Code, is amended by
11 amending Subsections (2) and (3) and deleting Subsection (4) to
12 read as follows:

13 (1) "Department" means the Texas Department of
14 Criminal Justice.

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

18 (3) "Project RIO" means ~~[the]~~ project ~~[for]~~
19 reintegration of offenders.

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

22 SECTION 5. Section 306.002, Labor Code, is amended as
23 follows:

24 Sec. 306.002. PROJECT RIO. The project for reintegration
25 of offenders is a statewide employment referral program designed to
26 reintegrate into the labor force persons sentenced or committed to
27 ~~[a state jail felony facility or the institutional division and~~

1 ~~persons committed to~~ the correctional institutions division or the
2 Texas Youth Commission.

3 SECTION 6. Section 306.005, Labor Code, is amended by
4 amending Subsections (1) and (2) to read as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

18 (A) encouraging and referring persons to the
19 project; and

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

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

24 Sec. 306.007. PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON STATE SERVICES
25 FOR EX-OFFENDERS AND EMPLOYERS. (a) To assist in the reintegration
26 into the labor force of the persons formerly sentenced to the
27 correctional institutions [~~institutional~~] division or committed to

1 the Texas Youth Commission [~~state jail division~~], the commission
2 through Project RIO shall provide:

3 (1) to those persons:

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

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

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

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

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

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

17 (A) information from the Governor's Economic
18 Development and Tourism Office [~~Texas Department of Economic~~
19 ~~Development~~] on the enterprise zone program; and

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

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

1 or potential employers of those persons, and to local workforce
2 development boards:

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

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

7 (3) the Texas Veterans Commission; and

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

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

12 [~~(6) the Texas Workforce Investment Council.~~]

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

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

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

26 (1) provides the commission with information
27 detailing populations released from facilities who might benefit

1 from post release Project RIO service provision. Such information
2 shall include:

3 (A) Demographic and identifying information;

4 (B) Release or parole address;

5 (C) Comprehensive state offense history,
6 including date released from correctional facility, sentence
7 discharge date, and conditions of parole;

8 (D) Assessment information;

9 (E) Educational and work histories; and,

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;

14 (G) Other services provided pre-release pursuant
15 to this title.

16 (2) provides the commission with referral information
17 from department and Texas Youth Commission parole operations,
18 necessary to implement the provision of post release employment
19 services;

20 (3) provides the parole officer with information on an
21 ex-offender's participation in employment services; and

22 (4) provides the parole officer with information about
23 an ex-offender's entry into employment.

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