

By: Turner

H.B. No. 3637

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the administration of Project RIO (Reintegration of Offenders).

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 306, Labor Code, is transferred to Chapter 501, Government Code, redesignated as Subchapter F of that chapter, and amended to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER F [~~CHAPTER 306~~]. PROJECT RIO

(REINTEGRATION OF OFFENDERS)

Sec. 501.171 [~~306.001~~]. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Commission" [~~"Department"~~] means the Texas Workforce Commission [~~Department of Criminal Justice~~].

(2) "Correctional institutions division" means the correctional institutions division of the department.

(3) "Project RIO" means the project for reintegration of offenders.

Sec. 501.172 [~~306.002~~]. PROJECT RIO. The project for reintegration of offenders is a statewide employment referral program designed to reintegrate into the labor force persons sentenced to the correctional institutions division or committed to the Texas Youth Commission.

Sec. 501.173 [~~306.003~~]. ADMINISTRATION. The department, the Texas Youth Commission, and the commission shall cooperate to maximize the effectiveness of Project RIO. For that purpose, the

1 department [~~commission~~] shall administer the project.

2           Sec. 501.174           [~~306.004~~].           MEMORANDUM           OF  
3 UNDERSTANDING--ADOPTION. (a) The department, the commission, and  
4 the Texas Youth Commission shall each adopt a memorandum of  
5 understanding that establishes the respective responsibilities of  
6 each agency and of the divisions within the department.

7           (b) The department [~~commission~~] shall coordinate the  
8 development of the memoranda of understanding. The commission  
9 [~~department~~] and the Texas Youth Commission shall adopt rules as  
10 necessary to implement their respective memoranda and may amend the  
11 memorandum and those rules as necessary.

12           Sec.           501.175           [~~306.005~~].           MEMORANDUM           OF  
13 UNDERSTANDING--CONTENTS. (a) The memorandum of understanding  
14 between the department and the commission must establish the role  
15 of:

16                   (1) the correctional institutions division in  
17 ascertaining and encouraging an inmate's chances for employment by:

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

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

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

26                   (2) the community justice assistance division and the  
27 parole division of the department in:

1 (A) encouraging and referring persons to the  
2 project; and

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

5 (3) the department [~~commission~~] in developing and  
6 maintaining a statewide network for finding positions of employment  
7 that require the skills possessed by project participants and in  
8 helping those participants to secure employment.

9 (b) The memorandum of understanding between the Texas Youth  
10 Commission and the department [~~commission~~] must establish the roles  
11 of the institutional and community services division in the Texas  
12 Youth Commission and the role of the department [~~commission~~] in the  
13 same manner the roles of the department and commission are  
14 established under Subsection (a).

15 Sec. 501.176 [~~306.006~~]. PROJECT DIRECTOR. (a) The executive  
16 director of the department shall designate the director of Project  
17 RIO to coordinate the efforts of the affected state agencies and  
18 expedite the delivery of services to participants in the project,  
19 including prospective employers.

20 (b) The project director shall:

21 (1) propose, for adoption by the department  
22 [~~commission~~], standards and guidelines for the operation of the  
23 project;

24 (2) obtain information from appropriate state  
25 agencies and offices affiliated with the project to determine any  
26 necessary changes in the project;

27 (3) disseminate information statewide about the

1 project; and

2 (4) train department [~~commission~~] staff to assist in  
3 the operation of affiliated services.

4 Sec. 501.177 [~~306.007~~]. PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON STATE  
5 SERVICES FOR EX-OFFENDERS AND EMPLOYERS. (a) To assist in the  
6 reintegration into the labor force of persons formerly sentenced to  
7 the correctional institutions division or committed to the Texas  
8 Youth Commission, the department [~~commission~~] through Project RIO  
9 shall provide:

10 (1) to those persons:

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

13 (B) information from the Department of State  
14 Health Services on substance abuse treatment services;

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

17 (D) information from the Texas Veterans  
18 Commission on services for veterans; and

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

21 (2) to the employers and potential employers of those  
22 persons:

23 (A) information from the Texas Economic  
24 Development and Tourism Office on the enterprise zone program; and

25 (B) information from local workforce development  
26 boards on services listed in Section 2308.304 [~~Government Code~~].

27 (b) The department [~~commission~~] shall adopt a memorandum of

1 understanding with each of the following agencies that establishes  
2 the respective responsibilities of the department [~~commission~~] and  
3 the agencies in providing information described by Subsection (a)  
4 to persons formerly sentenced to the department [~~institutional~~  
5 ~~division or the state jail division of the Texas Department of~~  
6 ~~Criminal Justice~~], to employers or potential employers of those  
7 persons, and to local workforce development boards:

8 (1) the Department of State Health Services;

9 (2) the Texas Department of Housing and Community  
10 Affairs;

11 (3) the Texas Veterans Commission; and

12 (4) the Health and Human Services Commission.

13 Sec. 501.178 [~~306.008~~]. DATA SHARING. (a) To assist in the  
14 reintegration into the labor force of persons formerly sentenced to  
15 the correctional institutions division or committed to the Texas  
16 Youth Commission, the commission, the Texas Youth Commission, and  
17 the department shall establish a data interface that, at a minimum,  
18 provides to the department [~~commission~~]:

19 (1) detailed information about persons released from a  
20 correctional facility who might benefit from post-release Project  
21 RIO services, including:

22 (A) demographic and identifying information;

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

24 (C) a comprehensive state offense history,  
25 including the date of release from the correctional facility,  
26 sentence discharge date, and conditions of parole;

27 (D) assessment information;

1 (E) educational and work history;

2 (F) information related to participation in the  
3 work against recidivism program operated by the department's  
4 manufacturing and logistics division under the Texas Correctional  
5 Industries office; and

6 (G) other services provided under Title 4, Labor  
7 Code, [this title] before release from the correctional facility;  
8 and

9 (2) referral information from the department and the  
10 Texas Youth Commission necessary to implement the provision of  
11 post-release employment services.

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

16 (c) Information received from the Texas Youth Commission  
17 under this section is confidential and is not subject to disclosure  
18 under Chapter 552 [~~Government Code~~].

19 SECTION 2. Section 501.097, Government Code, is repealed.

20 SECTION 3. (a) The Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas  
21 Department of Criminal Justice shall coordinate the transfer of the  
22 administration of Project RIO as required by this Act.

23 (b) After transfer of the administration of Project RIO as  
24 required by this Act is complete, all unexpended appropriations for  
25 the administration of Project RIO made to the Texas Workforce  
26 Commission are transferred to the Texas Department of Criminal  
27 Justice for those purposes.

1           SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
2 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
3 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
4 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
5 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.