

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 2280
By: Ellis
Criminal Justice
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Every year, an increasing number of individuals leave jails and prisons and reenter the community from which they came. To address this burgeoning issue, a Reentry Policy Council (council) composed of representatives from 10 national organizations was established in 2001. While this council addresses reentry at a macro level, a similar council to address the issue at the micro level does not exist in Texas.

In April 2008, then-President George W. Bush signed the Second Chance Act to authorize grants to states and localities to promote safe and successful reintegration of ex-offenders. In order to receive federal Second Chance Act funding, that state must establish a reentry task force composed of representatives from state agencies, service providers, and other stakeholders.

As proposed, S.B. 2280 authorizes the creation of a statewide council to improve the coordination of reentry policies across state agencies and make Texas eligible for federal Second Chance Act grants. The council will be tasked with reviewing corrections policies, procedures, and programs for individuals exiting the corrections system and re-entering the community.

S.B. 2280 defines the purpose of the council; its membership and tenure; how often the council meets; who is the presiding officer; and the council's duties, guidelines, and limitations.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subtitle B, Title 4, Government Code, by adding Chapter 415, as follows:

CHAPTER 415: REENTRY POLICY COUNCIL

Sec. 415.001. DEFINITION. Defines "council."

Sec. 415.002. COUNCIL; COMPOSITION. (a) Provides that the Reentry Policy Council is created.

(b) Sets forth the 33 certain members who compose the council.

Sec. 415.003. DUTIES. ANNUAL REPORT. (a) Requires the council to:

- (1) analyze the statutory and regulatory obstacles to, and practices that impede, the reintegration of offenders into the community following their release or discharge;
- (2) examine methods of pooling resources and revenue streams to reduce the rate of recidivism among offenders;
- (3) identify best practices that have proven to be effective in reentry support, treatment, and intervention intended to reduce the harmful effects of an offender's confinement on the offender's family and community;

(4) advise the governor and the director of the criminal justice division of the governor's office on effective reentry policies and programs that can be funded through federal, state, and private grants; and

(5) perform any other duties required by the Second Chance Act of 2007 (Pub. L. No. 110-199) (relating to the reauthorization of the grant program for reentry of offenders into the community).

(b) Requires the council, not later than September 1 of each year, to deliver a report of the council's findings and recommendations to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the house of representatives and the senate with primary jurisdiction over corrections matters.

Sec. 415.004. TENURE OF MEMBERS. (a) Provides that an appointed member of the council serves a two-year term.

(b) Provides that a member who serves on the council by virtue of the member's office serves on the council for the period during which the member holds that office.

Sec. 415.005. COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT. Provides that a member of the council serves without compensation but, from funds appropriated to the criminal justice division of the governor's office, is entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official council duties as provided by Chapter 660 (Travel Expenses).

Sec. 415.006. PRESIDING OFFICER. Requires the council to select from among its members a presiding officer of the council.

Sec. 415.007. MEETINGS. Requires the council to meet at the call of the presiding officer.

Sec. 415.008. TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE. Requires the criminal justice division of the governor's office to provide the council with resources for data collection, research, and analysis, and publication of the council's findings and reports.

Sec. 415.009. GRANTS AND DONATIONS. Authorizes the council to accept grants and donations from public and private entities.

Sec. 415.010. CONSTRUCTION WITH OTHER LAW. Provides that Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees) does not apply to the council.

Sec. 415.011. SUNSET PROVISION; COUNCIL ABOLISHED. Provides that the council is subject to Chapter 325 (Texas Sunset Act). Provides that unless continued in existence as provided by that chapter, the council is abolished and this chapter expires September 1, 2013.

SECTION 2. (a) Requires the county judge of Dallas County, the county judge of El Paso County, and the county judge of Tarrant County to make the appointments required by Chapter 415, Government Code, as added by this Act not later than the 60th day after the effective date of this Act.

(b) Requires the Reentry Policy Council to submit the first report required by Section 415.003, Government Code, as added by this Act, not later than September 1, 2010.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.