

By: Turner of Harris

H.B. No. 1711

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to requiring the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to
3 establish a comprehensive reentry and reintegration plan for
4 offenders released or discharged from a correctional facility.

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

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 495, Government Code, is
7 amended by adding Section 495.028 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 495.028. CONTRACTS TO IMPLEMENT REENTRY AND
9 REINTEGRATION PLAN. The department may contract with private
10 vendors or other entities to implement the comprehensive reentry
11 and reintegration plan developed under Section 501.092, including
12 contracting to:

13 (1) coordinate the supervision and services provided
14 to offenders in correctional facilities with any supervision or
15 services provided to offenders who have been released or discharged
16 from the correctional facility;

17 (2) provide offenders awaiting release or discharge
18 with documents that are necessary after release or discharge,
19 including identification papers, medical prescriptions, job
20 training certificates, and referrals to services; and

21 (3) provide housing and structured programs,
22 including group homes for recovering substance abusers, through
23 which offenders are provided services immediately following
24 release or discharge.

1 SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 501, Government Code, is
2 amended by adding Sections 501.091, 501.092, and 501.098 to read as
3 follows:

4 Sec. 501.091. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

5 (1) "Correctional facility" means a facility operated
6 by or under contract with the department.

7 (2) "Offender" means an inmate or state jail defendant
8 confined in a correctional facility.

9 Sec. 501.092. COMPREHENSIVE REENTRY AND REINTEGRATION PLAN
10 FOR OFFENDERS. (a) The department shall develop a comprehensive
11 plan to reduce recidivism and ensure the successful reentry and
12 reintegration of offenders into the community following an
13 offender's release or discharge from a correctional facility.

14 (b) The reentry and reintegration plan developed under this
15 section must provide for:

16 (1) an assessment of each offender entering a
17 correctional facility to determine which skills the offender needs
18 to develop to be successful in the community following release or
19 discharge;

20 (2) programs that address the assessed needs of each
21 offender; and

22 (3) a comprehensive network of transition programs to
23 address the needs of offenders released or discharged from a
24 correctional facility.

25 (c) The programs provided under Subsections (b)(2) and (3)
26 must:

27 (1) be implemented by highly skilled staff who are

1 experienced in working with inmate reentry and reintegration
2 programs;

3 (2) provide offenders with:

4 (A) individualized case management and a full
5 continuum of care;

6 (B) life-skills training, including information
7 about budgeting, money management, nutrition, and exercise;

8 (C) education and, if an offender has a learning
9 disability, special education;

10 (D) employment training;

11 (E) appropriate treatment programs, including
12 substance abuse and mental health treatment programs; and

13 (F) parenting and relationship building classes;
14 and

15 (3) be designed to build for former offenders
16 post-release and post-discharge support from the community into
17 which an offender is released or discharged, including support from
18 agencies and organizations within that community.

19 (d) In developing the reentry and reintegration plan under
20 this section, the department shall ensure that the reentry program
21 for long-term inmates under Section 501.096 and the reintegration
22 services provided under Section 501.097 are incorporated into the
23 plan.

24 Sec. 501.098. FAMILY UNITY AND PARTICIPATION. (a) The
25 department shall adopt and implement policies that encourage family
26 unity while an offender is confined and family participation in an
27 offender's post-release or post-discharge transition to the

1 community. In adopting the policies, the department shall consider
2 the impact of department telephone, mail, and visitation policies
3 on the ability of an offender's child to maintain ongoing contact
4 with the offender.

5 (b) The department, when determining in which correctional
6 facility to house an offender, shall consider the best interest of
7 the offender's family and, if possible, house the offender in, or in
8 proximity to, the county in which the offender's family resides.

9 (c) The department shall conduct and coordinate research
10 that examines the impact of an offender's confinement on the
11 well-being of the offender's child.

12 SECTION 3. (a) Not later than January 1, 2010, the Texas
13 Department of Criminal Justice shall adopt and implement the
14 policies required by Section 501.098, Government Code, as added by
15 this Act.

16 (b) Not later than January 1, 2010, the Texas Department of
17 Criminal Justice shall develop and implement the comprehensive
18 reentry and reintegration plan for offenders as required by Section
19 501.092, Government Code, as added by this Act.

20 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
21 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
22 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
23 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
24 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.