

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2652
By: Allen
Corrections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties have raised concerns regarding the small number of Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) reentry coordinators available to provide assistance to the thousands of individuals who leave TDCJ each year. The parties contend that the ratio of coordinators to such individuals makes it nearly impossible for the coordinators to provide meaningful information, counseling, or resources to these individuals and that many of these individuals could help themselves if they had access to relevant, up-to-date, county-specific information about reentry services. C.S.H.B. 2652 seeks to remedy this issue by requiring TDCJ to identify reentry and reintegration resource guides, to develop county-specific information packets, and to make these resources available to all incarcerated individuals.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2652 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to identify organizations that provide reentry and reintegration resource guides and to collaborate with those organizations to make the resource guides available to all inmates. The bill requires TDCJ, at a minimum, to collaborate with nonprofit entities that specialize in criminal justice issues, faith-based organizations, and organizations that offer pro bono legal services to inmates or are composed of the families and friends of inmates. The bill requires TDCJ to make the resource guides available in the Windham School District libraries and in each correctional facility law library, peer educator classroom, chapel, reintegration specialist office, and area or classroom that TDCJ uses for the purpose of providing information about reentry to inmates. The bill requires TDCJ to make available a sufficient number of copies of the resource guides to ensure that each inmate is able to access a resource guide in a timely manner. The bill requires TDCJ to identify organizations with which to collaborate that provide county-specific information and to collaborate with those organizations to compile county-specific information packets for inmates and to provide such a packet to an inmate not less than six months before the inmate will discharge the inmate's sentence or as soon as practicable before releasing the inmate on parole, mandatory supervision, or conditional pardon. The bill requires a county-specific information packet to include for the applicable county, at a minimum, the following information:

- contact information of workforce offices, housing options, places of worship, support groups, peer-to-peer counseling groups, and other relevant organizations or agencies as determined by TDCJ and the collaborating organization;
- contact information of agencies and organizations that offer emergency assistance, such as food and clothing banks, temporary bus passes, low-cost medical assistance, and overnight and temporary housing;
- contact information of agencies and organizations that offer mental health counseling;

and

- information necessary for the inmate to apply for governmental assistance or benefits, including Medicaid, social security benefits, or nutritional assistance programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2652 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and highlighted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 501, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 501.0971 to read as follows:

Sec. 501.0971. PROVISION OF REENTRY AND REINTEGRATION INFORMATION TO INMATES. (a) The department shall identify organizations that provide reentry and reintegration resource guides and shall collaborate with those organizations to make the resource guides available to all inmates. At a minimum, the department shall collaborate with:

- (1) nonprofit entities that specialize in criminal justice issues;
- (2) faith-based organizations; and
- (3) organizations that:

(A) advocate for changes in the conditions of confinement;

(B) offer pro bono legal services to inmates; or

(C) are composed of the families and friends of inmates.

(b) The department shall make the resource guides available in the Windham School District libraries and in each of the following areas of a correctional facility:

- (1) law libraries;
- (2) peer educator classrooms;
- (3) chapels;
- (4) reintegration specialist offices; and
- (5) any area or classroom that is used by the department for the purpose of providing information about reentry to inmates.

(c) The department shall make available a sufficient number of copies of the resource guides to ensure that each inmate is able to access a resource guide in a timely manner.

(d) The department, in cooperation with an

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

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- (1) nonprofit entities that specialize in criminal justice issues;
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- (3) organizations that:

(A) offer pro bono legal services to inmates; or

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(b) The department shall make the resource guides available in the Windham School District libraries and in each of the following areas of a correctional facility:

- (1) law libraries;
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- (5) any area or classroom that is used by the department for the purpose of providing information about reentry to inmates.

(c) The department shall make available a sufficient number of copies of the resource guides to ensure that each inmate is able to access a resource guide in a timely manner.

(d) The department shall identify

organization described by Subsection (a), shall develop county-specific information packets.

The department shall provide a county-specific information packet to an inmate not less than six months before the inmate will discharge the inmate's sentence or as soon as practicable before releasing the inmate on parole, mandatory supervision, or conditional pardon.

(e) At the minimum, a county-specific packet described by Subsection (d) must include, for the applicable county:

(1) contact information, including telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, physical locations, and mailing addresses, as applicable, of:

(A) workforce offices, housing options, places of worship, support groups, peer-to-peer counseling groups, and other relevant organizations or agencies as determined by the department and the collaborating organization;

(B) agencies and organizations that offer emergency assistance, such as food and clothing banks, temporary bus passes, low-cost medical assistance, and overnight and temporary housing; and

(C) agencies and organizations that offer mental health counseling; and

(2) information necessary for the inmate to apply for governmental assistance or benefits, including Medicaid, social security benefits, or nutritional assistance programs under Chapter 33, Human Resources Code.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

organizations described by Subsections (a)(1) through (3) that provide information described by Subsection (e) and shall collaborate with those organizations to compile county-specific information packets for inmates.

The department shall provide a county-specific information packet to an inmate not less than six months before the inmate will discharge the inmate's sentence or as soon as practicable before releasing the inmate on parole, mandatory supervision, or conditional pardon.

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SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.