

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2811
By: Toth
Corrections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties contend that volunteers are an essential element in the rehabilitation and reentry of incarcerated individuals and that some of the difficulties necessary to provide a comprehensive and successful reentry program can be alleviated by reaching out to community organizations. Current law requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to actively encourage volunteer organizations to assist in providing programs to aid in the transition between confinement and society and to reduce incidence of recidivism. However, there is concern that other than a few ministry or addiction recovery programs, the programs currently available are insufficient. H.B. 2811 seeks to improve the availability of helpful programs to 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

H.B. 2811 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to adopt a policy that requires each warden to identify volunteer and faith-based organizations that provide specified programs for inmates housed in TDCJ facilities. The bill requires the policy to require each warden to actively encourage such organizations to provide specified programs for inmates in the warden's facility and removes a provision requiring TDCJ itself to actively encourage such organizations to provide those programs. The bill requires the policy to require that each warden submit a report to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice not later than December 31 of each year that includes, for the preceding fiscal year, a summary of the programs provided to inmates and the actions taken by the warden both to identify volunteer and faith-based organizations willing to provide programs to inmates and to encourage those organizations to provide programs in the warden's facility. The bill requires TDCJ, not later than December 1, 2013, to adopt the policy, including a schedule for implementing the policy.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.