

By: Thompson of Harris

H.B. No. 137

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the authority of a court to grant a commutation of
3 punishment for certain persons released on parole.

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

5 SECTION 1. Chapter 48, Code of Criminal Procedure, is
6 amended by adding Article 48.07 to read as follows:

7 Art. 48.07. COMMUTATION FOR CERTAIN PAROLEES. (a) A person
8 released on parole may file a motion with the court in which the
9 person was convicted requesting that the court commute the person's
10 sentence if:

11 (1) the person was released on parole not less than 10
12 years before the date the motion is filed;

13 (2) the person's release on parole was not revoked at
14 any time during the period described by Subdivision (1); and

15 (3) the person is not required to register as a sex
16 offender under Chapter 62.

17 (b) The person must submit with the motion information
18 relevant to the person's rehabilitation, including:

19 (1) the person's employment history while released on
20 parole;

21 (2) information concerning any educational or
22 training programs completed by the person while confined or
23 released on parole;

24 (3) information concerning any volunteer activities

1 of the person; and

2 (4) any letters of support for the person's motion.

3 (c) On receipt of a motion under this article, the court
4 shall:

5 (1) notify the attorney representing the state in the
6 jurisdiction in which the person was convicted; and

7 (2) request from the Texas Department of Criminal
8 Justice under Section 508.313, Government Code, information
9 related to the conduct of the person while on parole.

10 (d) The attorney representing the state may submit to the
11 court any relevant information.

12 (e) The court may hold a hearing to consider the motion and
13 may take testimony from the person who submitted the motion or from
14 any other person having relevant information. If the court holds a
15 hearing, the court shall provide notice of the hearing to the
16 attorney representing the state and allow the attorney to
17 participate in the hearing.

18 (f) Not later than the 180th day after the date a motion is
19 filed under this article, the court shall review the motion, the
20 information obtained under Subsection (c)(2) or provided by the
21 attorney representing the state, and any testimony presented at the
22 hearing, if applicable, to determine whether the person who filed
23 the motion meets the eligibility requirements under Subsection (a).
24 If the person is eligible, the court shall issue an order commuting
25 the person's sentence if the court determines that it is in the best
26 interest of justice, the public, and the person.

27 (g) The authority of a court under this article is limited

1 to commuting the person's sentence to reflect the time served by the
2 person while confined or released on parole as of the date the order
3 is issued. In commuting the sentence the court may not impose
4 conditions on the issuance of the order or otherwise related to the
5 person's release.

6 (h) A person who receives an order of commutation under this
7 article is considered to have fully discharged the person's
8 sentence.

9 SECTION 2. Section 508.313(d), Government Code, is amended
10 to read as follows:

11 (d) In this section, "eligible entity" means:

12 (1) a government agency, including the office of a
13 prosecuting attorney;

14 (2) an organization with which the department
15 contracts or an organization to which the department provides a
16 grant; ~~[or]~~

17 (3) an organization to which inmates are referred for
18 services by the department; or

19 (4) a court considering a motion under Article 48.07,
20 Code of Criminal Procedure.

21 SECTION 3. The change in law made by this Act applies to a
22 person on parole on or after the effective date of this Act,
23 regardless of whether the person was released on parole before, on,
24 or after that date.

25 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect December 1, 2021, but only
26 if the constitutional amendment proposed by the 87th Legislature,
27 Regular Session, 2021, authorizing the legislature to enact laws

1 providing for a court to grant a commutation of punishment to a
2 person who has successfully served the required number of years on
3 parole is approved by the voters. If that amendment is not approved
4 by the voters, this Act has no effect.