

By: Eckhardt

S.B. No. 1833

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to post-release housing for inmates released on parole or to mandatory supervision.

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

SECTION 1. Section 508.157, Government Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsections (f) and (g) to read as follows:

(b) ~~The [If the department does not operate or contract for the operation of a residential correctional facility in the county of legal residence of an inmate or releasee, the]~~ department may issue, for an inmate described by Subsection (a) or for a releasee, payment for the cost of temporary post-release housing that:

(1) meets any conditions or requirements imposed by a parole panel;

(2) meets or exceeds the standards developed by the Reentry Housing Task Force; and

(3) is located in the county of legal residence of the inmate or releasee~~[, and~~

~~[(3) except as provided by Subsection (e-1), is in a structure that existed on June 1, 2009, as a multifamily residence or as a motel to which Section 156.001, Tax Code, applies].~~

(f) The department shall actively seek grants from any source for the purpose of expanding the use of temporary post-release housing payments under Subsection (b) as an

1 alternative to housing an inmate described by Subsection (a) or a
2 releasee in a residential correctional facility. Notwithstanding
3 Subsection (d), the department may issue payments under Subsection
4 (b) out of grant funds received for that purpose.

5 (g) The department shall:

6 (1) prioritize the use of temporary post-release
7 housing payments under Subsection (b) to reduce the average number
8 of days an inmate described by Subsection (a) or a releasee is
9 housed in a residential correctional facility; and

10 (2) reduce the number of inmates or releasees housed
11 in a residential correctional facility if the department determines
12 that the issuance of payments under Subsection (b) increases the
13 availability of temporary post-release housing that meets or
14 exceeds the standards described by Subsection (b)(2).

15 SECTION 2. Subchapter E, Chapter 508, Government Code, is
16 amended by adding Sections 508.158 and 508.159 to read as follows:

17 Sec. 508.158. POST-RELEASE HOUSING PLANNING PROCEDURE AND
18 REPORT. (a) In this section, "residential correctional facility"
19 has the meaning assigned by Section 508.157.

20 (b) The department shall implement a post-release housing
21 planning procedure for releasees that includes the early
22 identification and assessment of inmates who do not have an
23 established plan for housing following release on parole or to
24 mandatory supervision.

25 (c) In implementing the post-release housing planning
26 procedure, the department shall create a needs assessment to
27 identify:

1 (1) inmates who would benefit from the use of
2 temporary post-release housing payments under Section 508.157(b);

3 (2) inmates who require more intensive planning for
4 post-release housing; and

5 (3) the particular housing needs of inmates due to a
6 disability or an inmate's familial circumstances.

7 (d) Not later than February 1 of each year, the department
8 shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker
9 of the house of representatives, and each standing committee of the
10 legislature with primary jurisdiction over the department a report
11 that includes the following information for the preceding year:

12 (1) the number of inmates described by Subsection (b)
13 and the department's efforts to find post-release housing for those
14 inmates;

15 (2) the department's efforts to reduce the length of
16 time between an inmate's parole approval and the release of the
17 inmate on parole for an inmate described by Subsection (b);

18 (3) the department's efforts to expand post-release
19 housing options in local communities, including post-release
20 housing that meets or exceeds the standards developed by the
21 Reentry Housing Task Force;

22 (4) the average number of days a releasee is housed in
23 a residential correctional facility; and

24 (5) the number of releasees who absconded from a
25 residential correctional facility.

26 Sec. 508.159. REENTRY HOUSING TASK FORCE; BIENNIAL REPORTS.

27 (a) In this section, "task force" means the Reentry Housing Task

1 Force established under this section.

2 (b) The Reentry Housing Task Force is established and is
3 composed of members appointed by the executive director. The task
4 force must include:

5 (1) at least one representative from each of the
6 following entities:

7 (A) the Texas Department of Housing and Community
8 Affairs;

9 (B) the Texas Veterans Commission;

10 (C) a nonprofit organization that is engaged in
11 creating recovery housing options in this state;

12 (D) a nonprofit organization that advocates for
13 persons who are required to register as a sex offender under Chapter
14 62, Code of Criminal Procedure;

15 (E) a nonprofit organization for family members
16 of persons who are incarcerated; and

17 (F) a nonprofit organization that operates a
18 Continuum of Care program funded wholly or partly by the United
19 States Department of Housing and Urban Development;

20 (2) two or more individuals who are health care
21 professionals, one of whom must be a certified emergency medical
22 technician; and

23 (3) one individual who specializes in the reentry of
24 female releasees.

25 (c) The executive director shall designate a member of the
26 task force as the presiding officer.

27 (d) The task force shall meet every other month or at the

1 call of the presiding officer.

2 (e) A member of the task force is not entitled to
3 compensation for service on the task force but is entitled to
4 reimbursement for travel expenses incurred by the member while
5 conducting the business of the task force as provided by the General
6 Appropriations Act.

7 (f) The task force shall:

8 (1) evaluate, on an ongoing basis, strategies for
9 improving post-release housing for releasees, including:

10 (A) methods to provide housing options for
11 releasees that are in addition to housing provided by residential
12 correctional facilities, as that term is defined by Section
13 508.157; and

14 (B) the feasibility of expanding the use of
15 housing vouchers or other payments for the post-release housing of
16 releasees;

17 (2) develop and update as necessary standards for
18 post-release housing for releasees that promote:

19 (A) the successful reintegration of releasees
20 into the community; and

21 (B) community health and safety;

22 (3) develop and update as necessary a post-release
23 housing planning procedure for releasees that the department may
24 implement that includes the early identification and assessment of
25 inmates who do not have an established plan for housing following
26 release on parole or to mandatory supervision; and

27 (4) develop and update as necessary recommendations to

1 address the risk of homelessness for releasees who are unable to
2 find suitable post-release housing.

3 (g) The task force and the department shall evaluate, on an
4 ongoing basis, the implementation of post-release housing
5 initiatives and planning procedures under this subchapter.

6 (h) Not later than June 1 of each even-numbered year, the
7 task force shall prepare and submit to the department a written
8 report on the task force's findings under this section, including
9 standards, procedures, and recommendations developed under
10 Subsection (f) and any updates to those standards, procedures, and
11 recommendations.

12 (i) Not later than June 30 of each even-numbered year, the
13 department shall compile the results of the evaluations conducted
14 under Subsection (g) and the findings submitted under Subsection
15 (h) and shall prepare and submit to the legislature a written report
16 on the evaluation results and findings. The report must include any
17 proposed legislative recommendations.

18 (j) Chapter 2110 does not apply to the size, composition, or
19 duration of the task force or to the designation of the task force's
20 presiding officer.

21 SECTION 3. Section 508.157(e-1), Government Code, is
22 repealed.

23 SECTION 4. Notwithstanding the requirements of Section
24 508.157(b)(2), Government Code, as amended by this Act, until
25 January 1, 2023, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice may
26 continue to make payments for the cost of temporary post-release
27 housing under the requirements of Section 508.157(b), Government

1 Code, that existed immediately before the effective date of this
2 Act, and those requirements are continued in effect for that
3 purpose.

4 SECTION 5. Not later than December 1, 2021, the Texas
5 Department of Criminal Justice shall implement the post-release
6 housing planning procedure and assessment required by Section
7 508.158, Government Code, as added by this Act.

8 SECTION 6. Not later than November 1, 2021, the executive
9 director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice shall appoint
10 the members to the Reentry Housing Task Force as required by Section
11 508.159, Government Code, as added by this Act.

12 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.