

By: Allen

H.B. No. 965

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 Section 508.158 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 an assessment to identify:

27 (1) inmates who are low-risk and would benefit from

1 the use of temporary post-release housing payments under Section
2 508.157(b); and

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 (5) the number of releasees who absconded from a
23 residential correctional facility.

24 SECTION 3. Section 508.157(e-1), Government Code, is
25 repealed.

26 SECTION 4. (a) In this section:

27 (1) "Department" means the Texas Department of

1 Criminal Justice.

2 (2) "Releasee" has the meaning assigned by Section
3 508.001, Government Code.

4 (3) "Task force" means the Reentry Housing Task Force
5 established under this section.

6 (b) The Reentry Housing Task Force is established and is
7 composed of members appointed by the executive director of the
8 department. The task force must include at least one
9 representative from each of the following entities:

10 (1) the Texas Department of Housing and Community
11 Affairs;

12 (2) the Texas Veterans Commission;

13 (3) a nonprofit organization that is engaged in
14 creating recovery housing options in this state;

15 (4) a nonprofit organization that advocates for
16 persons who are required to register as a sex offender under Chapter
17 62, Code of Criminal Procedure;

18 (5) a nonprofit organization for family members of
19 persons who are incarcerated; and

20 (6) a nonprofit organization that operates a Continuum
21 of Care program funded wholly or partly by the United States
22 Department of Housing and Urban Development.

23 (c) Not later than November 1, 2023, the executive director
24 of the department shall:

25 (1) appoint the members of the task force; and

26 (2) designate a member as the presiding officer of the
27 task force.

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

6 (e) The task force shall:

7 (1) evaluate strategies for improving post-release
8 housing for releasees, including:

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

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

16 (2) develop standards for post-release housing for
17 releasees that are consistent with nationally recognized standards
18 for recovery housing;

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

24 (4) develop recommendations to address the risk of
25 homelessness for releasees who are unable to find suitable
26 post-release housing.

27 (f) Not later than December 1, 2024, the task force shall

1 prepare and submit to the department and the legislature a written
2 report on the task force's findings under this section. The report
3 must include the standards, procedures, and recommendations
4 developed under Subsection (e) of this section.

5 (g) The task force is abolished and this section expires
6 September 1, 2025.

7 SECTION 5. Notwithstanding the requirements of Section
8 508.157(b)(2), Government Code, as amended by this Act, until
9 January 1, 2025, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice may
10 continue to make payments for the cost of temporary post-release
11 housing under the requirements of Section 508.157(b), Government
12 Code, that existed immediately before the effective date of this
13 Act, and those requirements are continued in effect for that
14 purpose.

15 SECTION 6. Not later than December 1, 2023, the Texas
16 Department of Criminal Justice shall implement the post-release
17 housing planning procedure required by Section 508.158, Government
18 Code, as added by this Act.

19 SECTION 7. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice shall
20 submit the first report required by Section 508.158(d), Government
21 Code, as added by this Act, not later than February 1, 2025.

22 SECTION 8. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.