



Ana Yáñez-Correa
Executive Director
tel 512.441.8123
cell 512.587.7010
info@criminaljusticecoalition.org
www.criminaljusticecoalition.org

FACT SHEET

REAL REWARDS FOR PAROLE SUCCESS

GRANT EARLY TERMINATION OF PAROLE OR MANDATORY SUPERVISION FOR THOSE WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT

TEXAS NEEDS TO STOP THE REVOLVING DOOR THAT RESULTS FROM TREMENDOUS DEMAND ON PAROLE RESOURCES.

To avoid perpetuating the revolving door to prison – whereby inmates are released only to return shortly thereafter – Texas must tailor parole so that offenders have tools for re-entry that will enable them to live responsible lives. Also, to maintain faith in the system and in the potential for rehabilitation, parolees must be given real incentives to fully participate.

WHAT DOES H.B. 403 DO?

H.B. 403 would require the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (TBPP) to grant early termination of parole or mandatory supervision for individuals who, as a condition of release, participate in and successfully complete a substance abuse treatment program approved by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

A person whose parole or mandatory supervision was terminated under this bill would be considered to have completed his or her full period of parole or mandatory supervision. The bill would also require that all revenue generated from participants' fees be appropriated only for the administration and provision of substance abuse treatment.

H.B. 403 WILL BETTER FACILITATE OFFENDER RE-INTEGRATION.

H.B. 403 would provide a meaningful incentive for offenders to not only participate but to make real progress in substance abuse treatment, which will allow them to successfully complete the program by truly rehabilitating themselves.

Although successful re-entry preoccupies parolees, they are less able to meet minor parole requirements as they make continued personal progressions (including obtaining a job, maintaining a family, and participating in community activities). In other words, when low-risk parolees are supervised longer than necessary, their likelihood of committing a minor infraction increases. A low-level parolee who fails to avoid persons or places of disreputable or harmful character, who misses an appointment with a parole officer, or who fails to pay the monthly supervision and administrative fee could be revoked from parole and sent back to prison. Research has revealed that parolees currently returning to prison after a revocation “will have served longer prison sentences than in the past, be more disconnected from family and friends, have a higher prevalence of untreated substance abuse and mental illness, and be less educated and employable than their predecessors.”

H.B. 403 INCREASES PUBLIC SAFETY BY FOCUSING ON INDIVIDUALS WHO POSE MORE RISK.

Allowing for early termination of parole and mandatory supervision for qualifying former offenders (those whose primary ailment is drug addiction) will strengthen parole officers' effectiveness by allowing them to attend to more to high-risk parolees, especially during the critical early period of their sentences, which will reduce crime and save money by eliminating needless spending on long, superfluous supervision. Reducing caseloads will also reduce the likelihood of a parolee absconding by allowing officers to focus resources on tracking and closely supervising individuals with a high flight risk, thereby increasing public safety by reducing these individuals' likelihood of recidivating. In addition, early termination has the potential to free up space in already crowded halfway houses that currently have long waiting lists. This, in conjunction with increased availability of treatment, could allow for the release of more low-level parolees and, in turn, a decrease in the Texas prison population, which has put prisons at maximum capacity.