
Human Services Committee

HB 1729

Brief Description: Extending work release time for offenders.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Roberts, O'Brien and Walsh; by request of Department of Corrections.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the number of months of an offender's sentence that may be served in partial confinement.

Hearing Date: 2/7/07

Staff: Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

Background:

Inmates serving sentences in Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities may only be released from a correctional facility under limited circumstances. One of the circumstances for leaving the total confinement of a correctional facility prior to the completion of a sentence is when the offender becomes eligible for partial confinement.

Partial confinement means confinement for no more than one year in a facility or institution operated or utilized under contract by the state or any other unit of government, or if home detention or work crew has been ordered by the court, in an approved residence, for a substantial portion of each day with the balance of the day spent in the community. Partial confinement includes work release, home detention, work crew, and a combination of work crew and home detention.

The DOC and many local jails operate work release programs at various locations around the state. The DOC also contracts with a number of private sector businesses to operate several of the programs. Work release programs allow inmates to leave an incarceration facility for a specified number of hours each day to work or otherwise re-establish themselves in the community. Although most inmates maintain jobs while on work release status, others are released for job seeking, educational programming, training, treatment, or other approved activities. Inmates are

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expected to return to the facility for the rest of the day following their daily work release program. Generally, offenders participating in work release are inmates transitioning from total confinement to the community, and participation in the program is based upon behavior. If a work release inmate violates the conditions of his or her custody, the inmate may be required to spend the remainder of his or her sentence in confinement and may lose any earned early release reduction of his or her sentence.

Currently, an offender may spend no more than the final six months of his or her sentence in partial confinement.

Summary of Bill:

An offender may spend up to 12 of the final months of his or her sentence in partial confinement designed to aid the offender in finding work and reestablishing himself or herself in the community.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.