

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6488

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, January 31, 2006

Title: An act relating to offender education.

Brief Description: Creating a program for offender education.

Sponsors: Senators Franklin, Kline, Hargrove, Fairley, Weinstein and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 1/24/06, 1/31/06 [DPS, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6488 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Stevens, Ranking Minority Member and Thibaudeau.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Brandland.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Carrell.

Staff: Shani Bauer (786-7468)

Background: With few exceptions, inmates are required by law to participate in department-approved education programs, work programs, or both. Inmates who refuse to participate in such programs lose privileges in receiving earned release credits or other privileges. The Department of Corrections (DOC) is directed to make every effort to establish appropriate education and work programs for inmates who wish to participate.

On average, employment and education-related programs in correctional institutions have been shown to lead to statistically significant reductions in criminal recidivism rates. Likewise, employment training and job assistance programs for released offenders in the community show modest reductions in criminal recidivism rates.

Summary of Substitute Bill: As a component of basic academic skills education, the DOC is required to provide offenders with the opportunity to participate in programs designed to educate offenders who are United States citizens on American citizenship and civil rights.

Program topics must include, but are not limited to: responsible citizenship; rights lost to felony offenders and ways to restore those rights; legal financial obligations; sex offender

registration and community notification; and civic participation. The offender is awarded a certificate upon successful completion of the program.

Before the offender's release into the community, the DOC is required to give offenders information regarding community service providers that provide educational services to offenders. The DOC is also required to work with community service providers to develop a standard curriculum for released offenders.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The program on American citizenship and civil rights is designated as a component of basic academic skills education to be provided to offenders who are United States citizens.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This is a basic education tool to help an offender connect with the community and learn about civil responsibility. Offenders need to know what is expected from them as responsible citizens. This is a research-based program that can be provided at all facilities. Information regarding community service providers is needed upon an offender's release.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Michael J. Paris, Department of Corrections.