

[2015 Session] Require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to Provide Reentry Resources to Incarcerated Individuals

Policy Background:

TDCJ is required to develop a comprehensive reentry plan to assist individuals leaving prison.^[1] It is difficult, if not impossible, for the 139 Reentry Case Managers in TDCJ to provide meaningful assistance to the approximately 70,000 individuals leaving Texas prisons each year,^[2] necessitating the use of volunteers and encouraging incarcerated individuals to participate in the creation of their own reentry plans.

Texas policy-makers should require TDCJ to collaborate with organizations that provide meaningful information to incarcerated individuals about a wide range of topics – including geriatric, veterans, and gender-specific issues, reentry and community programs, and many others – and to make this information “always available” in libraries and in any areas that will increase access to this information.

Providing exiting inmates with already-compiled information about available community-based service providers and other relevant organizations will supplement the efforts of existing Reentry Case Managers, and it will have long-term public safety advantages with little cost.

Key Facts:

- Research suggests that the most critical period for someone leaving prison is the period immediately following release.^[3]
- Many Texas organizations – private, non-profit, local, and faith-based – already compile locale-specific resource lists that could be made available to incarcerated individuals preparing for their return to society. Access to this information would greatly help incarcerated individuals formulate reentry plans based on available community providers, and it would increase the chances that these individuals will successfully reintegrate into their community and become productive, law-abiding citizens.

Relevant Bills:

- **Bill Number:** [HB 569](#) (Allen, Guillen)
Bill Caption: Relating to providing inmates of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice with information regarding reentry and reintegration resources.
TCJE Materials: [Fact Sheet](#) | [Testimony](#)
Hearing Notice: House Corrections Committee, [Notice of Public Hearing on March 19, 2015](#)
Archived Hearing Video: House Corrections Committee, [03/19/15 Video](#) [TCJE testimony begins at 00:08:12]
- **Bill Number:** [SB 578](#) (authors: Hinojosa, Rodríguez | sponsor: Allen)
Bill Caption: Relating to providing inmates of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice with information regarding reentry and reintegration resources.
TCJE Materials: [Fact Sheet](#) | [CSSB 578 Testimony](#)
Hearing Notice: Senate Criminal Justice Committee, [Notice of Public Hearing on March 24, 2015](#)
Archived Hearing Video: Senate Criminal Justice Committee, [03/24/15 Video](#) [TCJE testimony begins at 00:18:46]
Outcome: [Effective 9/1/15](#)

[1] Tex. Gov. Code § 501.092(b)(2)-(5). This reentry plan includes “programs that address the assessed needs of offenders; a comprehensive network of transition programs; the identification or providers of existing local programs and transitional services; and other providers of services as necessary to adequately assess and address the needs of each offender.”

[2] Texas Department of Criminal Justice, *Statistical Report: Fiscal Year 2014*, p. 3; http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/documents/Statistical_Report_FY2014.pdf. Total releases in FY 2013 equaled 70,521.

[3] Council of State Governments, Reentry Policy Council, *Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community*, New York: Council of State Governments, January 15, 2005; <http://csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/publications/the-report-of-the-re-entry-policy-council-charting-the-safe-and-successful-return-of-prisoners-to-the-community/>