

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2158
By: White
Corrections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There are ongoing concerns that the lack of adequate treatment and rehabilitation programs for inmates leads to high rates of recidivism. C.S.H.B. 2158 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to adopt a policy to increase the availability of peer support services, including certified peer specialist services, to inmates confined in facilities operated by or under contract with TDCJ.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2158 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to adopt a policy to increase the availability of peer support services to a person confined in a facility operated by or under contract with TDCJ. The policy must:

- allow for persons who have previously been convicted of an offense to serve as certified peer specialists in such a facility and specify the conditions under which the person may serve as such; and
- allow for persons confined in such a facility to serve in a peer support role, provided that the persons are trained and supervised by a community-based organization with whom TDCJ collaborates to provide peer specialist training.

The bill requires TDCJ, in implementing the policy, to collaborate with community-based organizations that provide peer specialist training and to encourage and assist certain confined persons to participate in such training. The bill requires TDCJ to adopt and implement the policy not later than September 1, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2158 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute does not include provisions providing for TDCJ's required establishment of a work release program that allows inmates and state jail felony defendants to work at paid employment in the community while continuing to serve a term of confinement in a facility operated by or under contract with TDCJ.