

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 918
By: White
Corrections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that many inmates lack basic identifying information and employment documentation. As such, these inmates may have difficulty obtaining employment and reintegrating into the community on their release. C.S.H.B. 918 seeks to facilitate this transition by requiring the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to provide newly discharged or released inmates with certain documentation.

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. 918 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), when an inmate who is able to work, as determined by TDCJ based on the inmate's age or mental or physical condition, is discharged or released on parole, mandatory supervision, or conditional pardon and the intended residence designated by the inmate is in Texas, to provide the inmate with relevant documentation to assist the inmate in obtaining post-release employment, including the following:

- a copy of the inmate's job training record from a TDCJ job training program and the inmate's work record, as applicable; and
- for an inmate who completed a prerelease program required by a parole panel as a condition of release, documentation that the inmate has completed a practice job interview and a resume that includes any trade learned by the inmate and the inmate's proficiency at that trade.

C.S.H.B. 918 requires TDCJ to determine whether an inmate being discharged or released on parole, mandatory supervision, or conditional pardon has a certified copy of the inmate's birth certificate and a copy of the inmate's social security card. If the inmate does not have such a document, TDCJ is required to submit to the appropriate entity on behalf of the inmate a request for the issuance of the applicable document. The bill requires TDCJ to submit such a request as soon as is practicable to enable TDCJ to provide the inmate with the applicable document when TDCJ discharges or releases the inmate. These requirements expressly do not apply to an inmate who is not legally present in the United States or who was not a resident of Texas before the person was placed in TDCJ custody.

EFFECTIVE DATE

January 1, 2020.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 918 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 limits the requirement for TDCJ to provide discharged or released inmates with certain documentation for employment to inmates who are able to work, as determined by TDCJ based on age or mental or physical condition, and the substitute further limits the requirement to provide a resume and documentation of a practice job interview to inmates who completed a prerelease program required by a parole panel as a condition of release.

The substitute does not include a certified copy of the inmate's birth certificate, the inmate's social security card or a replacement social security card, and if, applicable, a personal identification certificate issued at TDCJ request among the documentation TDCJ is required to provide to a discharged or released inmate for the express purpose of assisting the inmate in obtaining post-release employment. The substitute includes instead a requirement for TDCJ to determine whether an inmate being discharged or released has a certified copy of the inmate's birth certificate and a copy of the inmate's social security card and a requirement for TDCJ to submit a request for the issuance of an applicable document on behalf of an inmate who does not have such a document, with certain exceptions.

The substitute changes the bill's effective date from September 1, 2019, to January 1, 2020.