

SUBJECT: Requiring policies that consider probationers' work and service schedules

COMMITTEE: Corrections — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 5 ayes — White, Allen, S. Davis, Romero, Sanford

2 nays — Schaefer, Tinderholt

WITNESSES: For — Doots Dufour, Diocese of Austin; Jorge Renaud, Texas Advocates For Justice; Mary Kate Bevel, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Yannis Banks, Texas NAACP; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Nicholas Hudson, American Civil Liberties Union of Texas; Traci Berry, Goodwill Central Texas; Ellen Arnold, Texas Association of Goodwills; Jennifer Erschabek and Patricia Kassel, Texas Inmate Families Association (TIFA); Jeff Gifford; Sally Gifford; Lauren Johnson; Lauren Oertel; Debra Sanner; Gary Wardian;)

Against — David Daniel, Kaufman County Community Supervision and Corrections Department, Texas Probation Association

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Carey Welebob, Texas Department of Criminal Justice)

BACKGROUND: Government Code, ch. 76 governs community supervision and corrections departments, which are county-level agencies that oversee defendants on probation.

DIGEST: HB 1504 would require community supervision and corrections departments to adopt a policy that supervising officers consider defendants' work, treatment, or community service schedule when planning any required meetings or visits.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017, and departments would need to adopt a policy by January 1, 2018.

SUPPORTERS HB 1504 would make it easier for defendants to comply with the terms of

SAY: probation. This would improve cooperation between defendants and supervising officers and increase the likelihood of a defendant successfully completing a term of probation. It also save money by avoiding incarceration resulting from a technical revocation for missing mandatory appointments. Local departments could develop their policies for local circumstances, as well as defendants' schedules. Departments would be best positioned to evaluate their staffing needs and available resources..

OPPONENTS
SAY: HB 1504 could further stress county resources. County agencies already struggle to meet their obligations with existing funding. Requiring them to accommodate each individual's personal circumstances and schedules would become unnecessarily burdensome.