

**SUBJECT:** Requiring TDCJ to assist certain offenders with developmental disabilities

**COMMITTEE:** Corrections — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — White, Allen, Bailes, Bowers, Dean, Morales, Neave, Sherman, Stephenson

0 nays

**WITNESSES:** For — Patricia Crocker, The R. L. and Patricia Crocker Foundation; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Traci Berry, Goodwill Central Texas; Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness-Texas; Lori Henning, Texas Association of Goodwills; Douglas Smith, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Marc Levin)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: April Zamora)

**BACKGROUND:** Government Code sec. 501.069 requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to create and maintain a program for offenders who are suspected of or identified as having an intellectual disability or borderline intellectual functioning and whose adaptive functioning is significantly impaired. The program must provide a safe environment to an offender while confined and specialized programs, treatments, and activities to assist the offender in effectively managing, treating, or accommodating the offender's intellectual disability or borderline intellectual functioning.

Interested parties have noted that a large number of inmates in the Texas criminal justice system are developmentally disabled and may find it difficult to reintegrate into society. These individuals also may be more likely to reoffend without rehabilitation.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 2897 would require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to develop and identify community resources to assist offenders who were suspected of or identified as having an intellectual disability or

borderline intellectual functioning to successfully re-enter and reintegrate into the community. The department would have to develop and implement a re-entry and reintegration plan that was person-centered and based on the individual needs of an offender. The plan could include the coordination of treatment, identification of housing assistance, and delivery of other transitional services.

Funds appropriated to TDCJ could not be expended to provide residential housing assistance to an offender who was serving a sentence for an offense that would make an inmate ineligible for release to mandatory supervision.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.