

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2719  
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Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Youth who have been placed in foster care are at higher risk of being involved in the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems. Many children in the Texas foster care system have experienced significant trauma, including violence, neglect, abuse, threats, humiliation, and deprivation. Although research provides a growing understanding of possible connections between childhood trauma and later criminal involvement, there is concern that the full scale of the problem is impossible to determine because the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) does not currently inquire during the inmate intake process whether an individual has at any time been in foster care.

To better address the complex challenges facing youth in the foster care system, Texas must develop sufficient resources and programs to provide foster youth with the skills needed to succeed, which will require collecting data on potential future criminal justice system involvement.

H.B. 2719 seeks to address such issues relating to at-risk foster youth. The bill provides for the identification of reentry programs and resources that are working and gaps in service or areas where improvements can be made by instituting reporting requirements for TDCJ.

H.B. 2719 amends current law relating to collecting and reporting information concerning inmates who have been in the conservatorship of a state agency responsible for providing child protective services and concerning inmate parole, reentry, and integration.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 501, Government Code, by adding Section 501.023, as follows:

Sec. 501.023. INFORMATION CONCERNING FOSTER CARE HISTORY. (a) Requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), during the diagnostic process, to assess each inmate with respect to whether the inmate has at any time been in the conservatorship of a state agency responsible for providing child protective services.

(b) Requires TDCJ, not later than December 31 of each year, to submit a report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each standing committee having primary jurisdiction over TDCJ. Requires that the report summarize statistical information concerning the total number of inmates who have at any time been in the conservatorship of a state agency responsible for providing child protective services.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 501, Government Code, by adding Section 501.103, as follows:

Sec. 501.103. ANNUAL REPORT. (a) Requires TDCJ's reentry and integration division and parole division, not later than December 31 of each year, to jointly prepare and submit an annual report to:

- (1) the governor;
- (2) the lieutenant governor;
- (3) the speaker of the house of representatives;
- (4) the standing committees of the house and senate primarily responsible for criminal justice issues and corrections issues; and
- (5) the reentry task force.

(b) Requires that the report include the following information about parole during the year in which the report is submitted:

- (1) the number of referrals of releasees for employment, housing, medical care, treatment for substance abuse or mental illness, education, or other basic needs;
- (2) the outcome of each referral;
- (3) the identified areas in which referrals are not possible due to unavailable resources or providers;
- (4) community resources available to releasees, including faith-based and volunteer organizations; and
- (5) parole officer training.

(c) Requires that the report include the following information about reentry and reintegration during the year in which the report is submitted:

- (1) the outcomes of programs and services that are available to releasees based on follow-up inquiries evaluating clients' progress after release;
- (2) the common reentry barriers identified during releasees' individual assessments, including in areas of employment, housing, medical care, treatment for substance abuse or mental illness, education, or other basic needs;
- (3) the common reentry benefits and services that reentry coordinators help releasees obtain or apply for;
- (4) available community resources, including faith-based and volunteer organizations; and
- (5) reentry coordinator training.

(d) Requires that the report required by Subsection (a) be made available to the public.

SECTION 3. Requires the reentry and integration division and the parole division of TDCJ to submit the initial report required by Section 501.103, Government Code, as added by this Act, not later than December 31, 2014.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2013.