

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 323

BY REPRESENTATIVE NELSON

CORRECTIONS/PRISONERS: Creates the Back on Track Louisiana Pilot Program

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 15:745.4, relative to the confinement of inmates; to provide relative to persons
3 committed to the custody of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections who
4 are confined in a parish jail; to create the Back on Track Louisiana Pilot Program;
5 to provide relative to participation in the program; to provide relative to payments
6 to local jails; to provide relative to funding; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 15:745.4 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

9 §745.4. Back on Track Louisiana Pilot Program; establishment

10 A. Subject to the availability of funds and appropriate resources, the sheriff
11 of each parish is hereby authorized to establish and administer a Back on Track
12 Louisiana Pilot Program for inmates of any jail or prison under the jurisdiction of the
13 sheriff.

14 B. The legislature recognizes that an essential component of reducing
15 recidivism is providing an individual with the necessary skills to afford the
16 individual with the opportunity to earn a living, support his family, and contribute
17 to his community.

18 C. For purposes of this Section, "inmate" shall mean an inmate sentenced to
19 the Department of Public Safety and Corrections who is in the custody of the sheriff.

1 D. The Department of Public Safety and Corrections shall promulgate rules
2 in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to assign a percentage value
3 to each of the following criteria that an inmate satisfied while being confined in a
4 parish jail:

- 5 (1) Attained a tenth grade reading level.
- 6 (2) Obtained a high school diploma or GED credential.
- 7 (3) Obtained an industry-based certificate.
- 8 (4) Established a bank account with at least two months of living expenses.
- 9 (5) Obtained a valid driver's license.
- 10 (6) Established a verified permanent address prior to release.
- 11 (7) Obtained a release or extinguishment of any prior wage garnishments or
12 debts.
- 13 (8) Secured an employment opportunity prior to release.

14 E.(1) The Department of Public Safety and Corrections shall calculate one-
15 half of the average number of days of incarceration of an inmate times the amount
16 the department pays the sheriff each day for the housing of inmates in parish jails as
17 provided by R.S. 15:824(B)(1)(a).

18 (2) The sheriff shall report to the department the criteria, as established
19 pursuant to Subsection D of this Section, accomplished by each inmate.

20 (3) The department shall multiply the total percentage value of the criteria
21 accomplished by each inmate times the value established by Paragraph (1) of this
22 Subsection, and the department shall pay that amount to the sheriff for each inmate.

23 (4) The amount paid for each inmate pursuant to Paragraph (3) of this
24 Subsection shall be in addition to the amount paid pursuant to R.S. 15:824(B)(1)(a).

25 F. The department shall be responsible for the tracking and collection of
26 recidivism rates of inmates relative to the criteria in Subsection D of this Section and
27 may adjust the criteria from time to time to reflect reduced recidivism.

28 G. The secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections is
29 hereby authorized to provide inmates housed in parish jails with access to as many

1 support services as possible to increase the likelihood of successful reentry into
 2 society and to reduce recidivism. If any inmate violates the conditions prescribed
 3 by the sheriff or the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, his program
 4 privileges may be withdrawn.

5 H. The provisions of this Section shall be implemented only to the extent
 6 that funds are appropriated for this purpose and to the extent that is consistent with
 7 available resources. If any funding for the program is not adequate to cover the costs
 8 of payments provided to the sheriff in Subsection E of this Section, payments may
 9 be reduced proportionately relative to available funding and the secretary may limit
 10 the number of participating parishes to serve as pilot locations for the program.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 323 Original

2022 Regular Session

Nelson

Abstract: Creates the Back on Track Louisiana Pilot Program.

Proposed law authorizes the sheriff of each parish to establish and administer a Back on Track La. Pilot Program for inmates of any jail or prison under the jurisdiction of the sheriff.

Proposed law requires the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections to promulgate rules to assign a percentage value to each of the following criteria that an inmate satisfied while being confined in a parish jail:

- (1) Attained a 10th grade reading level.
- (2) Obtained a high school diploma or GED credential.
- (3) Obtained an industry-based certificate.
- (4) Established a bank account with at least two months of living expenses.
- (5) Obtained a valid driver's license.
- (6) Established a verified permanent address prior to release.
- (7) Obtained a release or extinguishment of any prior wage garnishments or debts.
- (8) Secured an employment opportunity prior to release.

Proposed law requires the department to calculate one-half of the average number of days of incarceration of an inmate times the amount the department pays the sheriff each day for the housing of inmates in parish jails as provided by present law (R.S. 15:824(B)(1)(a)).

Proposed law requires the sheriff to report to the department the proposed law criteria accomplished by each inmate.

Proposed law further requires the department to multiply the total percentage value of the proposed law criteria accomplished by each inmate times the value established by proposed law and the department shall pay that amount to the sheriff for each inmate. Further provides that the amount paid for each inmate shall be in addition to the amount paid pursuant to present law (R.S. 15:824(B)(1)(a)).

Proposed law authorizes the secretary of the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections to provide inmates housed in parish jails with access to as many support services as possible to increase the likelihood of successful reentry into society and to reduce recidivism.

Provides that proposed law shall be implemented only to the extent that funds are appropriated and to the extent that is consistent with available resources. Provides that payments to the sheriff may be reduced proportionately relative to available funding and the secretary may limit the number of participating parishes that serve as pilot locations for the proposed law program.

(Adds R.S. 15:745.4)