

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1109

BY REPRESENTATIVE CREWS

VETERANS: Provides relative to the Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 15:1199.22(B), 1199.23(2), 1199.24(A)(2) through (10), (B),
3 (C), (D)(1), and (E) through (G), 1199.25, and 1199.26(A)(2), and to enact R.S.
4 15:1199.23(3) and (4), 1199.24(D)(6) and (H), 1199.26(A)(3), and 1199.27, and to
5 repeal R.S. 15:1199.24(A)(11) and (12), relative to the Post-Conviction Veterans
6 Mentor Program; to provide for the authorization of the Post-Conviction Veterans
7 Mentor Program, to provide for eligibility criteria; to provide for a Veterans
8 Oversight Committee; to provide for a pilot program; and to provide for related
9 matters.

10 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

11 Section 1. R.S. 15:1199.22(B), 1199.23(2), 1199.24(A)(2) through (10), (B), (C),
12 (D)(1), and (E) through (G), 1199.25, and 1199.26(A)(2) are hereby amended and reenacted
13 and R.S. 15:1199.23(3) and (4), 1199.24(D)(6) and (H), 1199.26(A)(3), and 1199.27 are
14 hereby enacted to read as follows:

15 §1199.22. Purpose; authorization of Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program

16 * * *

17 B. The secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections is
18 authorized to establish a Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program for incarcerated
19 veterans, hereinafter referred to as "program". The department, with the assistance
20 of the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs, shall adopt regulations and
21 guidelines as it considers necessary for the administration and implementation of this
22 program. The provisions of this Part shall be implemented by the department only

1 to the extent consistent with ~~that funds are~~ available funding, whether internal or
2 external, and ~~within the department for this purpose and to the extent that is~~
3 consistent with available resources.

4 §1199.23. Definitions

5 For the purposes of this Part:

6 * * *

7 (2)(a) "Veteran" means ~~an honorably or generally~~ a discharged member of
8 the United States Armed Forces or organized militia of the several states and
9 territories, including but not limited to a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force,
10 Space Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard, Air National Guard,
11 Reserves, State Guard, or a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service,
12 Environmental Science Services Administration, or National Oceanic and
13 Atmospheric Administration, or its predecessor, the United States Coast and
14 Geodetic Survey, whose discharged characterization identifies a release from service
15 under conditions other than dishonorable.

16 (b) A first responder who meets all of the following criteria:

17 (i) Is certified by P.O.S.T. and has at least two years of service.

18 (ii) Is identified as an emergency medical technician who is a prehospital
19 medical professional, holds a state license, and has maintained national registry
20 certification for at least two years.

21 (c) A state-certified or state-recognized first responder who has been
22 certified for at least two years, has proof of service, and has served at an assigned
23 duty station, including a fire station or other designated post, for at least two years.

24 (3) "Veterans Oversight Committee" means a committee established by the
25 secretaries of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the
26 Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs consisting of persons from both
27 departments and other veteran-associated advocates. The committee shall provide
28 guidance and supervision of the program and shall serve as the supervisory arm of
29 the department to ensure the success of the program.

1 ~~(9) The offender is committed to the custody of the Department of Public~~
2 ~~Safety and Corrections.~~

3 ~~(10)~~(8) The offender has attained ~~forty~~ thirty years of age and has served at
4 least ten years of the term or terms of imprisonment.

5 ~~(11)~~(9) The offender has completed a mentor training program as considered
6 appropriate by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

7 ~~(12)~~(10) If the offender is serving a life sentence, The sentencing court and
8 the district attorney of the jurisdiction of the conviction shall consent.

9 B. Upon meeting the eligibility requirements set forth in Subsection A of this
10 Section, the offender shall then be subject to ~~pre-screening~~ prescreening and
11 assessments for suitability by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections,
12 office of adult services, for placement in a veterans transitional work ~~release program~~
13 facility; in accordance with ~~R.S. 15:1111~~ R.S. 15:1199.26.

14 C.(1) If the offender is approved to participate in the program by the
15 Department of Public Safety and Corrections, office of adult services, ~~they~~ he shall
16 be transferred to an appropriate veterans transitional work ~~program~~ facility. After
17 three successful years in a veterans transitional work ~~program~~ facility, the offender
18 shall be granted a parole hearing by the committee on parole as provided in
19 Subsection G of this Section, if not otherwise eligible for a hearing prior to such
20 date, or by any other eligibility requirements stipulated by the board.

21 (2) If the offender is serving a life sentence, then after five successful years,
22 the offender shall be granted a pardon hearing by the committee on pardons. If the
23 offender's sentence is subsequently reduced to a fixed number of years, then the
24 offender shall be granted a parole hearing as provided in Subsection G of this
25 Section, if not otherwise eligible for a hearing prior to such date, or by any other
26 eligibility requirements stipulated by the board.

27 (3) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, any offender
28 who is granted parole pursuant to this Section, and whose parole is subsequently
29 revoked after participation in the program, shall not be eligible to participate in the
30 program a second time.

1 D. Additional requirements for participation in the program:

2 (1) Continue to participate in all programming considered appropriate by the
3 Veterans Oversight Committee, Department of Public Safety and Corrections, and
4 the Department of Veterans Affairs.

5 * * *

6 (6) Offenders may be required to submit to electronic monitoring.

7 E. Liability for all activity and possible illegal activity shall fall solely on the
8 offender participating in the program. The Department of Public Safety and
9 Corrections and its agents shall have indemnity for any ~~and all~~ actions taken by the
10 offender that may be illegal, that subjects the offender to parole revocation, or that
11 are deemed eligible to terminate the offender's participation in the Post-Conviction
12 Veterans Mentor Program, and for any advice, education, action, or information
13 relayed by the offender to any employee, mentee, or other participant in the program
14 that may or may not result in action that causes any outcome.

15 F. Any violation of the conditions of eligibility provided for in Subsection
16 D of this Section shall subject the offender to disciplinary sanctions up to and
17 including removal from the veterans transitional work ~~release program~~ facility. Any
18 offender removed from the program shall not be eligible for further consideration
19 pursuant to this Part.

20 G. After the successful completion of ~~at least three years~~ the requirements
21 of the program at the veterans transitional work ~~release program~~ facility, the offender
22 shall be granted a hearing before the committee on parole. If the offender is granted
23 parole by the committee on parole, then the offender shall be released on parole in
24 accordance with the provisions of R.S. 15:574.4.1 and 574.4.2. Any offender whose
25 parole is revoked after participation in the program shall not be eligible to participate
26 in the program a second time.

27 H. No offender is guaranteed acceptance into the program based solely upon
28 his veteran status or any other status. All offenders are duly screened, and the
29 department has the right to deny any offender, without reason, especially offenders
30 deemed a risk to public safety.

1 §1199.25. Mentor program for Veterans Court probation program; job assistance

2 While participating in the Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program, the
3 offender shall ~~serve~~ successfully complete the program and may participate in a
4 business industry vocational work program, upon ~~written~~ approval of the ~~presiding~~
5 ~~judge department~~, as a mentor in the Veterans Court probation program in the parish
6 of the transitional work release program in which the offender is housed.

7 §1199.26. ~~Veterans Transitional~~ transitional work facilities

8 A.

9 * * *

10 (2) Such facilities shall be operated and maintained for those offenders who
11 serve as mentors for the Veterans Court probation program and those veterans who
12 have strong rehabilitation potential. ~~Existing transitional work release program~~
13 ~~facilities, otherwise known as work release, may be used to provide services and~~
14 ~~opportunities to the veterans participating in the program to benefit both the veterans~~
15 ~~participating and the parish jails.~~

16 (3) Such facilities shall serve as treatment facilities as defined in R.S.
17 13:5366 of the Veterans Court program.

18 * * *

19 §1199.27. Purpose; pilot program; Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program;
20 efficacy; reporting

21 A.(1) The Legislature of Louisiana recognized the need to assist incarcerated
22 military veterans with veteran-focused rehabilitation programs to reduce the
23 incidence of recidivism. The Legislature of Louisiana also recognizes the need to
24 protect and maintain public safety. It is the intent of the Legislature of Louisiana to
25 create an opportunity to track the success of the implementation of the Post-
26 Conviction Veterans Mentor Program.

27 (2) Therefore, the secretaries of the Department of Public Safety and
28 Corrections and the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs may establish,
29 operate, contract, support, or partner to create a pilot program to study the

1 effectiveness of the Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program, with the goal of
2 assessing program implementation, to further the best interests of the state, their
3 departments, public safety, and the participating offenders.

4 B. The pilot program shall run no less than three years. The secretaries of the
5 Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the Louisiana Department of
6 Veterans Affairs shall generate a report semiannually and submit the report to the
7 House Special Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs by February fifteenth
8 and July fifteenth, respectively, of each year the pilot operates. The secretaries shall
9 include in the report, at a minimum, the number of veteran offenders participating
10 in the program, the number of disciplinary offenses initiated, and the corrective
11 measures used. Further, the secretaries shall include in the report the total amount
12 of class participation hours, participating jurisdictions of the Veterans Court
13 Probation program and Veterans Court Program, and any other information deemed
14 relevant upon request of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans
15 Affairs.

16 C. Upon completion of the pilot program, the Department of Public Safety
17 and Corrections and the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide a
18 full synopsis of the program and its regulations and guidelines to the House Special
19 Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs to determine if any revisions of
20 legislation, regulations, guidelines, curriculum, or procedures are appropriate.

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 1109 Original

2026 Regular Session

Crews

Abstract: Modifies the Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program and authorizes the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections (DPS&C), in conjunction with the La. Dept. of Veterans Affairs, to establish a pilot program of the Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program.

Present law establishes the Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program.

Proposed law requires the DPS&C to confer with the La. Dept. of Veterans Affairs to adopt regulations to implement the program.

Proposed law adds certain requirements of emergency medical technicians in order to qualify for the program.

Proposed law creates the Veterans Oversight Committee to provide guidance and supervision to the program.

Proposed law defines "veterans transitional work facility".

Proposed law changes certain requirements for participating in the program, including the following:

- (1) Allows offenders convicted of violent crimes or sex offenses to participate in the program.
- (2) Lowers the minimum age from 40 years to 30 years of age.
- (3) Requires the district attorney of the convicting jurisdiction to consent to the offender's participation in the program if the offender is serving a life sentence.

Proposed law provides that if an offender is serving a life sentence, after five years in the program, he will be granted a pardon hearing by the committee on pardons.

Proposed law provides that if an offender is granted parole pursuant to present law and then his parole is revoked, the offender shall not be eligible to participate in the program a second time.

Proposed law provides that offenders may be subject to electronic monitoring.

Proposed law provides that no offender is guaranteed acceptance into the program based solely on his veteran status.

Proposed law authorizes the DPS&C and La. Dept. of Veterans Affairs to create a pilot program to determine the success of the Post-Conviction Veterans Mentor Program.

Proposed law requires the pilot program to run at least three years and requires a semi-annual report to be submitted to the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs during each year that the pilot program operates.

(Amends R.S. 15:1199.22(B), 1199.23(2), 1199.24(A)(2)-(10), (B), (C), (D)(1), and (E)-(G), 1199.25, and 1199.26(A)(2); Adds R.S. 15:1199.23(3) and (4), 1199.24(D)(6) and (H), 1199.26(A)(3), and 1199.27; Repeals R.S. 15:1199.24(A)(11) and (12))