

Regular Session, 2014

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 173

BY SENATOR BROWN

PUBLIC SFTY/CORRECT DEPT. Requests strategies to provide offenders committed to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and confined in parish correctional facilities the necessary education, job skills and training, and needed behaviors, and to provide needed mental health care to all offenders committed to the department, to facilitate successful reentry upon release.

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Reentry Advisory Council to identify strategies to afford offenders committed to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections who are confined in parish correctional facilities the support necessary to enhance education, job skills and training, and needed behaviors to facilitate successful reentry upon release pursuant to the Reentry Advisory Council and Offender Rehabilitation Workforce Development Act and to provide needed mental health care for all committed to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections in need of such services, whether confined to a state or parish correctional facility, all to facilitate successful reentry upon release, and to urge and request the secretary of the department to take steps to carry out such strategies.

WHEREAS, R.S. 15:1199.1 through R.S. 15:1199.16 establishes and provides for the " Reentry Advisory Council and Offender Rehabilitation Workforce Development Act"; and

WHEREAS, as stated in that Act:

(1) An essential component of reducing recidivism is providing an individual with the necessary occupational skills to afford him the opportunity to earn a living, support his family, and contribute to his community and that it is absolutely essential to provide proper

1 substance abuse counseling, mentoring, and other programs to assist individuals as they
2 return to their communities with a focus on breaking the cycle that prevents them from
3 moving forward with their lives.

4 (2) Successful offender reentry and reintegration into the community is a matter of
5 critical importance to the public's safety, but reentry is often unsuccessful due to the barriers
6 ex-offenders face upon release; these barriers include but are not limited to a lack of
7 education and job skills, employment prohibition in selected occupations, mental health, and
8 substance abuse problems, access to valid identification documents, child support
9 enforcement regulations, access to public housing and other public benefits, and strained or
10 fragile family and community ties.

11 (3) The ability of ex-offenders to obtain employment after incarceration and become
12 productive members of their communities is essential to reducing recidivism rates; however,
13 successfully finding employment is often difficult due to the reluctance of many employers
14 to hire individuals with criminal backgrounds.

15 (4) Without successful reentry into the community, recidivism is likely to occur,
16 causing detrimental effects to public safety, communities, families, taxpayers, and
17 ex-offenders.

18 (5) Offender reentry is a crime prevention strategy, which serves to reduce crime and
19 the number of crime victims and ultimately ensures opportunities for safer communities.

20 (6) Successful reentry is also a cost-saving measure which results in savings to state
21 and local criminal justice systems; and

22 WHEREAS, many offenders committed to the Department of Public Safety and
23 Corrections are in need of mental health services, whether confined to a state or parish
24 correctional facility; and

25 WHEREAS, the Reentry Advisory Council and Offender Rehabilitation Workforce
26 Development Act was enacted with the goal of establishing a more systematic approach to
27 identifying obstacles that impede successful reentry and developing and implementing
28 effective reentry strategies that improve public safety; and

29 WHEREAS, the legislature established the Reentry Advisory Council within the
30 Department of Public Safety and Corrections as an advisory body to the secretary, who is

1 tasked with the administration of the Act, and the legislature with the administration of the
2 program as authorized by the Act; and

3 WHEREAS, pursuant to the Act, an inmate rehabilitation and workforce
4 development program has been developed and implemented for offenders committed to the
5 Department of Public Safety and Corrections who are confined in state correctional facilities;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, as a large number of offenders that are committed to the Department
8 of Public Safety and Corrections are confined in parish correctional facilities, it is essential
9 to develop strategies, make recommendations, and implement the support necessary to
10 enhance education, job skills and training, and needed behaviors, to facilitate successful
11 reentry upon release.

12 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
13 urge and request the Reentry Advisory Council to identify strategies to afford offenders
14 committed to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections that are confined in parish
15 correctional facilities the support necessary to enhance education, job skills and training, and
16 needed behaviors and to provide needed mental health care for all committed to the
17 department in need of such services, whether confined to a state or parish correctional
18 facility, all to facilitate successful reentry upon release.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge
20 and request the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, pursuant to
21 strategies identified by the Reentry Advisory Council, to take necessary steps to extend the
22 inmate rehabilitation and workforce development program to offenders committed to the
23 Department of Public Safety and Corrections that are confined in parish correctional
24 facilities pursuant to the Reentry Advisory Council and Offender Rehabilitation Workforce
25 Development Act and to provide needed mental health care for all committed to the
26 department in need of such services, whether confined to a state or parish correctional
27 facility.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of the Department of Public Safety
29 and Corrections, with the assistance of the Reentry Advisory Council shall include in the
30 annual report to the House Committee on the Administration of Criminal Justice and the

1 Senate Committee on Judiciary B required pursuant to R.S. 15:1199.5(F) all actions taken
 2 to provide support necessary to enhance education, job skills and training, and needed
 3 behaviors to facilitate successful reentry upon release to afford offenders committed to the
 4 Department of Public Safety and Corrections that are confined in parish correctional
 5 facilities and all actions taken to provide needed mental health care for all committed to the
 6 department in need of such services, whether confined to a state or parish correctional
 7 facility.

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
 9 secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the Reentry Advisory
 10 Council.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
 of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

DIGEST

Brown

SCR No.

Requests the Reentry Advisory Council (council) to identify strategies to afford offenders committed to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPSC) that are confined in parish correctional facilities the support necessary to enhance education, job skills and training, and needed behaviors and to provide needed mental health care for all committed to the DPSC in need of such services, whether confined to a state or parish correctional facility, all to facilitate successful reentry upon release.

Requests DPSC secretary, pursuant to strategies identified by the council, to take necessary steps to extend the inmate rehabilitation and workforce development program to offenders committee to the custody of the department that are confined in parish correctional facilities pursuant to the Reentry Advisory Council and Offender Rehabilitation Workforce Development Act and to provide needed mental health care for all committed to the DPSC in need of such services, whether confined to a state or parish correctional facility.

Requires that the DPSC secretary, with the assistance of the council, include in the annual report to the House Committee on the Administration of Criminal Justice and the Senate Committee on Judiciary B required pursuant to R.S. 15:1199.5(F) all actions taken to provide support necessary to enhance education, job skills and training, and needed behaviors to facilitate successful reentry upon release to afford offenders committed to the DPSC that are confined in parish correctional facilities and all actions taken to provide needed mental health care for all committed to the DPSC in need of such services, whether confined to a state or parish correctional facility.