

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 203

BY REPRESENTATIVE PRICE

PUBLIC SFTY/CORRECTIONS: Provides relative to education, job skills and training, and mental health services for offenders to facilitate successful reentry upon release

1 A RESOLUTION

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

12 WHEREAS, Act No. 836 of the 2010 Regular Session established the "Reentry
13 Advisory Council and Offender Rehabilitation Workforce Development Act"; and

14 WHEREAS, as stated in that Act:

15 (1) An essential component of reducing recidivism is providing an individual with
16 the necessary occupational skills to afford him the opportunity to earn a living, support his
17 family, and contribute to his community and that it is absolutely essential to provide proper
18 substance abuse counseling, mentoring, and other programs to assist individuals as they
19 return to their communities with a focus on breaking the cycle that prevents them from
20 moving forward with their lives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 WHEREAS, the legislature established the Reentry Advisory Council within the
27 Department of Public Safety and Corrections as an advisory body to the secretary, who is
28 tasked with the administration of the Act, and the legislature with the administration of the
29 program as authorized by the Act; and

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

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

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

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

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of the Department of Public Safety
28 and Corrections, with the assistance of the Reentry Advisory Council, shall include in the
29 annual report on or before March first of each year to the House Committee on the
30 Administration of Criminal Justice and the Senate Committee on Judiciary B, as required

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

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

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)]

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Requests the Reentry Advisory Council (council) to identify strategies to afford offenders committed to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DPS&C) who 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 DPS&C in need of such services, whether confined to a state or parish correctional facility, all to facilitate successful reentry upon release.

Requests DPS&C secretary, pursuant to strategies identified by the council, to take necessary steps to extend the inmate rehabilitation and workforce development program to offenders committed to the custody of the department who are confined in parish correctional facilities and to provide needed mental health care for all committed to the DPS&C in need of such services, whether confined to a state or parish correctional facility.

Requires that the DPS&C secretary, with the assistance of the council, include in the annual report on or before March first of each year to the House Committee on the Administration of Criminal Justice and the Senate Committee on Judiciary B, the measures taken pursuant to this Resolution.