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S.291

Introduced by Senators Fox, Flory, and Sears

Referred to Committee on Institutions

Date: January 7, 2014

Subject: Corrections; correctional facilities; transition units

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to establish transition units at each State correctional facility for offenders granted reintegration furloughs.

An act relating to the establishment of transition units at State correctional facilities

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

~~Sec. 1. TRANSITION UNITS AT STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES~~
~~(a) On or before November 1, 2014, the Department of Corrections shall develop and provide to the Joint Corrections Oversight Committee a proposal for programs and services available to offenders at each transition unit established under subsection (b) of this section. The proposal shall include a detailed budget for funding:~~
~~(1) costs associated with remodeling each State correctional facility to incorporate a transition unit; and~~

1 ~~(2) transportation costs for transporting offenders to and from their place~~
2 ~~of employment.~~

3 ~~(b) Of the amount appropriated to the Department of Corrections in the~~
4 ~~FY 2015 2016 Capital Construction Act, sufficient funding shall be allocated~~
5 ~~to establish transition units at each State correctional facility , except as~~
6 ~~otherwise provided in subsection (c), to enable offenders granted furloughs~~
7 ~~pursuant to 28 V.S.A. § 808c to work in the community while residing in the~~
8 ~~facility.~~

9 ~~(c) No State-owned work camp shall be required to establish a transition~~
10 ~~unit under this section.~~

11 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

12 ~~This act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.~~

Sec. 1. TRANSITIONAL FACILITIES; DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; STUDY

(a) Findings. The General Assembly finds that the Department of Corrections has experienced a rise in costs of \$17,624,076.00 since FY 2012. The General Assembly further finds that there are offenders in the State of Vermont who are eligible for release from State correctional facilities but who are not released due to a lack of suitable housing. The General Assembly further finds that recidivism is reduced and public safety is enhanced when offenders receive supervision as they transition to their home community. Therefore, it is the intent of the General Assembly that the Department of Corrections shall explore the creation of secure transitional facilities so that offenders may return to their home communities. It is also the intent of the General Assembly that the housing in these facilities include programs for employment, training, transportation, and other appropriate services. It is also the intent of the General Assembly that the Department of Corrections work with communities to gain support for these programs and services.

(b) Recommendations. The Commissioner of Corrections shall examine and make recommendations for the establishment of transitional facilities

under the supervision of the Department of Corrections. The recommendations shall include an evaluation of costs associated with establishing transitional facilities, a detailed budget for funding transitional facilities, an estimate of State capital funding needs, potential site locations, a summary of the programming and services that are currently available to transitioning offenders, proposals for programming and services for transitioning offenders that may be needed, and eligibility guidelines for offenders to reside in transitional facilities, including the number of offenders who would be eligible for residence in a transitional facility.

(c) Report. On or before January 15, 2015, the Commissioner of Corrections shall submit the recommendations described in subsection (b) of this section to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions.

(d) Definitions. As used in this section, "transitional facility" means housing intended to be occupied by offenders granted furloughs to work in the community.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.