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H. 150 bill presentation  
House Institutions and Corrections  
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Purpose of the bill:

To increase parole eligibility for older inmates and inmates who have served their minimum sentence. Additionally, to allow incarcerated individuals with a serious medical condition the opportunity for parole.

Section I.

(3)

This allows consideration of parole eligibility for inmates between the ages of 55-65 who have already served ten years, though not the minimum sentence, unless there are unfulfilled programming requirements.

(4)

This allows consideration of parole eligibility for inmates sixty-five years or older who have already served five years, though not the minimum sentence, unless there are unfulfilled programming requirements.

Section II.

(d)

This adds a new medical category to conditions for parole. Previously only inmates with a terminal illness were allowed parole. This section allow those with a "serious medical condition" the same eligibility provided the inmate releases his or her personal health information.

Section III.

The effective date is July 1. 2017

Reasons for bill H. 150:

According to Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform, we have the second oldest inmate population in the country per capita and the second highest health care costs.

Keeping people locked up when they are not a danger to society serves no societal purpose. There is truth to the fact that the longer a person is incarcerated, the more institutionalized they become, and the harder it becomes to re-integrate into society in a positive and constructive way.

This bill passed the House on March 17, 2016. The bill had first reading in the Senate on March 22, 2016 and was sent to the Committee on Institutions. That committee did not take up the bill before the end of the session.

As originally introduced in 2016 the bill included a provision for compassionate release of terminally ill inmates, inmates who are confined to a bed for 50% of the time, and an inmate who has a chronic or serious medical condition or who is experiencing deteriorating health.

I'm not sure what the discussion was around removing that provision from the bill, but I hope that the committee will consider this. I am including the original bill.