

H.760

An act relating to fiscal year 2020 budget adjustments.

The Senate concurs in the House proposals of amendment to the Senate proposals of amendment with further proposal of amendment as follows:

In the Third House proposal of amendment by striking out Sec. 70a in its entirety, and inserting in lieu thereof a new Sec. 70a to read as follows:

Sec. 70a. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; GRADUATED
SANCTIONS; REENTRY HOUSING; REPORT

(a) On or before April 1, 2020, the Department of Corrections shall report to the Senate Committee on Judiciary, the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions, and the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations on how to strengthen existing graduated sanctions and incentives policies to ensure they reflect current research on best practices for responses to violation behavior that most effectively achieve behavior change and uphold public safety. The Department shall also identify reentry housing needs for corrections populations. As a part of this work, the Department shall submit its recommendations including initial cost estimates regarding:

(1) formalizing the use of incentives and sanctions in supervision practices at a 4:1 ratio and require incentives to be entered and tracked in the community supervision case management system;

(2) analyzing how supervision staff currently understand, implement, and input data regarding the Department's graduated sanctions policy to identify where practices differ across the State and, where necessary, provide additional staff training on the use and tracking of graduated sanctions;

(3) developing and implement a homeless screening tool for use when a person is booked into or released from Department facilities and track reports of homelessness among corrections populations in the Department's case management system;

(4) identifying and quantify high utilizers of corrections, homeless, and behavioral health services; inform statewide permanent supportive housing planning; and establish data match partnerships with appropriate Agency of Human Services departments to match Department of Corrections, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and Medicaid information;

(5) establishing a collaborative approach for the Department, the Department of Mental Health, and the Vermont Department of Health to contract with housing providers to coordinate responses for shared clients and identify how the State can better leverage local and federal housing vouchers;

(6) leveraging federal Medicaid funding or other funding to allow the Department's contractors' clients to stay in supportive housing after they are no longer under the supervision of the Department;

(7) reducing barriers to recovery housing by establishing evidence-based norms and expectations for contracts and certifications for sober and recovery housing providers, including allowing for the use of medications and restricting evictions due to relapse;

(8) redefining housing requirements for incarcerated persons in order to receive approval for furlough release; and

(9) improving data and case management systems.