

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Corrections and Institutions to which was referred
3 Senate Bill No. 112 entitled “An act relating to earned good time” respectfully
4 reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the House propose
5 to the Senate that the bill be amended by striking out all after the enacting
6 clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 Sec. 1. FINDINGS; INTENT

8 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

9 (1) For nearly 40 years, Vermont had a system of statutory good time
10 that permitted offenders to receive reductions in their sentences for
11 maintaining good behavior and participating in programming while in the
12 custody of the Commissioner of Corrections. This good time system was
13 repealed in 2005.

14 (2) In 2018, the General Assembly directed the Commissioner of
15 Corrections, in consultation with the Chief Superior Judge, the Attorney
16 General, the Executive Director of the Department of Sheriffs and State’s
17 Attorneys, and the Defender General, to submit a report (the Report) to the
18 Legislature on the advisability and feasibility of reinstating a system of
19 earned good time for persons under Department of Corrections supervision.
20 The Report was filed on November 15, 2018.

21 (3) In the Report, the Commissioner found that:

1 (A) empirical studies show that earned good time is effective at
2 prison population management, has little to no community impact or effect on
3 public safety, and is perceived by correctional administrators as having a
4 positive impact on facility control;

5 (B) earned good time reduces incarceration costs by an amount
6 ranging from \$1,800.00 to \$5,500.00 per inmate, depending on the number of
7 days an inmate's sentence is reduced; and

8 (C) although research is mixed, studies show that earned good time
9 can result in a crime rate reduction of 1–3.5 percent.

10 (4) On the basis of the Report's findings, the Commissioner concluded
11 that the Department should "reinstigate a program of earned good time for
12 sentenced inmates and individuals on furlough."

13 (5) In order to reduce the State's prison population by reintegrating
14 offenders into the community while maintaining public safety, a system of
15 earned good time should be reinstated in Vermont as soon as possible.

16 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the earned good time
17 program established pursuant to 28 V.S.A. § 818:

18 (1) be a simple and straightforward program that as much as possible
19 minimizes complexities in implementation and management;

1 (2) relies on easily ascertainable and objective standards and criteria for
2 awarding good time rather than subjectivity and the application of discretion
3 by the Department of Corrections; and

4 (3) recognizes that there is a role in the correctional system for
5 providing inmates with an incentive to reduce their sentences by adhering to
6 Department of Corrections requirements.

7 Sec. 2. 28 V.S.A. § 818 is added to read:

8 § 818. EARNED GOOD TIME; REDUCTION OF TERM

9 (a) On or before July 1, 2020, the Department of Corrections shall file a
10 proposed rule pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 implementing an earned good
11 time program.

12 (b) The earned good time program implemented pursuant to this section
13 shall comply with the following standards:

14 (1) The program shall be available for all sentenced offenders, including
15 furloughed offenders, provided that the program shall not be available to
16 offenders on probation or parole, to offenders eligible for a reduction of term
17 pursuant to 28 V.S.A. § 811, or to offenders sentenced to life without parole.

18 (2) Offenders shall earn a reduction of five days in the minimum and
19 maximum sentence for each month during which the offender:

20 (A) is not adjudicated of a major disciplinary rule violation;

1 (B) is not reincarcerated from the community for a violation of
2 release conditions, provided that an offender who loses a residence for a reason
3 other than fault on the part of the offender shall not be deemed reincarcerated
4 under this subdivision; and

5 (c) complies with a merit-based system designed to incentivize
6 offenders to meet milestones identified by the Department that prepare
7 offenders for reentry, if the offender has received a sentence of greater than
8 180 days.

9 (3) An offender who receives post-adjudication treatment in a residential
10 setting for a substance use disorder shall earn a reduction of one day in the
11 minimum and maximum sentence for each day that the offender receives the
12 inpatient treatment. While a person is in residential substance abuse treatment,
13 he or she shall not be eligible for good time except as provided in this
14 subsection.

15 (4) The Department shall provide timely notice no less frequently than
16 every 90 days to the offender and to any victim of record any time the offender
17 receives a reduction in his or her term of supervision pursuant to this section,
18 and the Department shall maintain a system that documents and records all
19 such reductions in each offender's permanent record.

20 (5) The program shall become effective upon the Department's adoption
21 of final proposed rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 843.

1 Sec. 3. 28 V.S.A. § 819 is added to read:

2 § 819. MERITORIOUS EXTRAORDINARY GOOD TIME

3 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Commissioner may, in
4 his or her discretion, award a reduction of up to 30 days in an offender's
5 minimum and maximum sentence if the Commissioner determines that the
6 offender has:

7 (1) acted to protect the life or safety of another person;

8 (2) performed an act that put the inmate in harm's way in order to
9 protect or preserve the life of another person; or

10 (3) performed an act of heroism during an emergency.

11 (b) An award of meritorious extraordinary good time under this section
12 may be made to an inmate:

13 (1) sentenced or committed to the custody of the commissioner as
14 defined in 28 V.S.A. § 701;

15 (2) furloughed as defined in 28 V.S.A. § 808;

16 (3) on parole as defined in 28 V.S.A. § 402; or

17 (4) on supervised community sentence as defined in 28 V.S.A. § 351.

18 (c) Within 30 days after an award of meritorious extraordinary good time
19 pursuant to this section, the Department's Victim Services Unit shall provide
20 notice of the award and the newly effective minimum and maximum release
21 dates to any victim of record.

1 Institutions and the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary a proposal for
2 implementing a system of presumptive parole for inmates in the custody of the
3 Commissioner of Corrections.

4 (b) The proposal developed pursuant to this section shall:

5 (1) address who is eligible for presumptive parole;

6 (2) address how presumptive parole would affect good time;

7 (3) provide a presumption that an eligible inmate who is serving a
8 sentence of imprisonment shall be released on parole upon completion of the
9 inmate's minimum sentence; and

10 (4) describe how the Department of Corrections may rebut the
11 presumption of parole may be rebutted and what standard the Parole Board
12 would used to decide whether parole should be granted.

13 (c) The Department of Corrections and the Parole Board shall consult with
14 the Attorney General and the Defender General in developing the proposal
15 required by this section.

16 (d) The Department of Corrections and the Parole Board shall provide
17 regular interim reports to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee on
18 its progress toward developing the proposal required by this section.

1 Sec. 7. SUNSET; **MERITORIOUS EXTRAORDINARY** GOOD TIME;
2 REPORT

3 (a) 28 V.S.A. § 819 (**meritorious extraordinary** good time) shall be repealed
4 on July 1, 2021.

5 (b)(1) On or before December 15, 2020, the Department of Corrections
6 shall provide a report on the **meritorious extraordinary** good time program
7 established pursuant to 28 V.S.A. § 819 to the House Committee on
8 Corrections and Institutions and the House and Senate Committees on
9 Judiciary.

10 (2) The report required by this subsection shall include:

11 (A) the number of offenders who have been awarded a **meritorious**
12 **extraordinary** good time sentence reduction and the basis for each reduction;
13 and

14 (B) an evaluation of the program and any recommended changes.

15 **Sec. 8. JOINT LEGISLATIVE JUSTICE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE; 2019**

16 **INTERIM MEETINGS**

17 Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 801(d), the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight
18 Committee may meet up to 10 times during adjournment between the 2019 and
19 2020 legislative sessions.

20 Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE

21 This act shall take effect on passage.

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(Committee vote: _____)

Representative _____

FOR THE COMMITTEE