

Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee: summary of legislation for 2019 legislative interim

S.112 (good time bill)

Sec. 6 (presumptive parole)

(a) On or before December 15, 2019, the Department of Corrections and the Parole Board shall report to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary a proposal for implementing a system of presumptive parole for inmates in the custody of the Commissioner of Corrections. (b) The proposal developed pursuant to this section shall:

(1) address who is eligible for presumptive parole;

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

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

(4) describe how the presumption of parole may be rebutted and what standard would be used to decide whether parole should be granted.

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

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

Sec. 8 (interim JOC meetings)

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

H.512 (miscellaneous judiciary bill)

Sec. 14 (probation and parole officers report)

On or before December 15, 2019, the Secretary of Human Services, in consultation with the Vermont State Employees Association, shall report to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee, the Senate and House Committees on Judiciary, and the House Committee on Correction and Institutions on best practices and standards for protecting probation and parole officers in the performance of their job duties.

Sec. 14a (juvenile jurisdiction report)

On or before December 15, 2019, the Vermont Sentencing Commission shall report to the Joint Justice Oversight Committee proposed alternatives, in light of 33 V.S.A. §5204a, for providing the court with

jurisdiction over cases where a person under 18 years of age commits a criminal offense that is not a listed crime under 13 V.S.A. §5301(7) and is not charged with the offense until after turning 18 years of age.

Appropriations bill

Sec. E.126.3 JOINT LEGISLATIVE JUSTICE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE; 2019 LEGISLATIVE INTERIM

(a) During the 2019 legislative interim, the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee shall consider the following criminal justice reform strategies as part of an effort which will be called Justice Reinvestment II. These policies should be pursued in order to create a smarter criminal justice system that prevents avoidable incarceration, returns people to communities without risking public safety, and reduces or eliminates the need for out-of-state prison placements or new prison bed capacity in Vermont:

- (1) furlough reform, including the possible elimination of furlough;
- (2) management of the detainee population;
- (3) sentencing reforms, including the possible elimination of weekend and nighttime sentences, and the elimination of work crew in favor of restorative justice;
- (4) expansion of restorative justice and diversion programs;
- (5) establishment of new transitional housing facilities to reintegrate offenders into the community;
- (6) establishment of new treatment-centered facilities as an alternative to incarceration for certain drug and DUI offenses;
- (7) parole reform, including presumptive parole; and
- (8) the release of non-violent women offenders for whom community-based treatment and services would be more appropriate.

(b) The Committee should utilize the expertise of the Justice Center of the Council on State Governments to the maximum extent possible, and shall report any recommendations in the form of proposed legislation to the General Assembly on or before December 15, 2019.

Sec. E.338.3 CORRECTIONS HEALTH CARE; REPORTS

(a) On or before November 15, 2019, the Department of Corrections shall provide an interim report to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee regarding:

(1) the Department's current and planned future efforts, in consultation with the Agency of Human Services and the other departments in the Agency, to integrate health care services delivered in correctional facilities with Vermont's broader health care reform initiatives;

(2) the Department's implementation of the requirement pursuant to Secs. E.338.1 and E.338.2 of this act that counseling and behavioral therapy services be provided as an essential element of medication-assisted treatment provided in correctional, as well as community, settings; and

(3) the Department's current and planned future efforts to increase the use of local health care professionals and hospitals and to reduce its reliance on traveling nurses and other temporary providers.

(b) On or before January 15, 2020, the Department shall provide a final report on the topics described in subdivisions (a)(1)–(3) of this section to the House Committees on Appropriations, on Corrections and Institutions, on Health Care, and on Human Services and the Senate Committees on Appropriations, on Health and Welfare, on Institutions, and on Judiciary.

H.460 (expungement bill)

Sec. 11. VERMONT SENTENCING COMMISSION; COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS; JUSTICE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE; REPORTS ON EXPUNGEMENT AND SEALING

During the 2019 legislative interim:

(1) the Vermont Sentencing Commission, established under 13 V.S.A. § 5451, shall conduct a comprehensive assessment of the statutes governing the expungement and sealing of criminal history records in Vermont, including reviewing the crimes eligible for expungement or sealing, the process by which criminal history records are expunged or sealed, the mechanism by which expunged or sealed records are indexed, and the effect of sealing or expungement. As a part of its assessment, the Commission shall evaluate all Vermont civil offenses and the crime of negligent operation of a motor vehicle under 23 V.S.A. § 1091(a) for their suitability for expungement or sealing eligibility.

(2) on or before November 1, 2019, the Commission shall report to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee and the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary with recommendations regarding:

(A) improvements to the expungement and sealing process; and

(B) any additional crimes or civil offenses appropriate for expungement or sealing eligibility.

(3) the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee, working with the Council of State Governments Justice Center, shall conduct a review of the Vermont statutes governing expungement and sealing of criminal history records and develop a comprehensive policy to help individuals with a criminal record overcome barriers to employment and licensing through clearing their records. Any recommendations

for reform of the expungement and sealing chapter and other relevant statutes shall be introduced in the form of proposed legislation for the 2020 legislative session.

Sec. 12. SURCHARGES STUDY GROUP

During the 2019 legislative interim, the Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services, the Office of the Court Administrator, Vermont Legal Aid, and a representative of the special investigative units created pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 1940 shall examine the issue of requiring a petitioner to pay outstanding surcharges prior to a court granting an expungement or sealing petition. On or before October 15, 2019, the group shall report to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

H.543 (Capital bill)

Sec. 2. STATE BUILDINGS

(d) For the amount appropriated in subdivision (b)(4) of this section (\$500,000.00 for statewide, planning, use, and contingency), the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services is authorized to use up to \$200,000.00 to assess relative costs and resource requirements for potential construction of a correctional facility that ranges in scale in order to accommodate the results of the Council of State Governments' study described in Sec. 28 of this act; provided, however, that the funds shall only become available after approval by the Joint Fiscal Committee and the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee. On or before March 15, 2020, the Commissioner shall submit a copy of the assessment to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions and the Senate Committee on Institutions.

Appropriation –FY 2020 \$20,323,423.00

Appropriation –FY 2021 \$21,325,813.00

Total Appropriation –Section 2 \$41,649,236.00

Sec. 28. COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS; CORRECTIONS; STUDY

(a) Intent. It is the intent of the General Assembly to work with the Council of State Governments (CSG) to assess the population trends and programming in the State's corrections system and that the State consider criminal justice reform strategies as part of the Justice Reinvestment II initiative. It is also the intent of the General Assembly that this assessment and initiative shall inform infrastructure needs for State correctional facilities.

(b) Study. The Legislative Branch shall contract with the Council of State Governments to work with the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches and conduct a review of programming, transitional services, and population trends in Vermont's correctional facilities. The review may include an evaluation of the women's population in Vermont and the programming and services needed to meet their needs, the detention population, and barriers that exist to reducing the population