

1 Introduced by Committee on Judiciary

2 Date:

3 Subject: Criminal procedure; corrections policy; diversion; pretrial services;  
4 probation and parole; furlough

5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to reform the  
6 State’s approach to criminal justice by reducing the population of incarcerated  
7 Vermonters and reinvesting the savings in strategies to improve public safety,  
8 reduce recidivism and revocations to prison, and support individual success  
9 on supervision, including: 1) allowing for probationers to earn credit towards  
10 their minimum sentence while serving probation; 2) expanding parole  
11 eligibility criteria and establishing a system of presumptive parole;  
12 3) streamlining the furlough system and creating a review process for  
13 furlough revocations or interruptions; 4) increasing the number of days per  
14 month an incarcerated offender can earn good time; and 5) requiring a report  
15 on the relationships between demographic factors and sentencing outcomes  
16 and a report on strategies to ensure sentencing decisions are informed by  
17 individual risk assessment information and available programming.

18 An act relating to justice reinvestment

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

2 Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE

3 (a) The General Assembly finds:

4 (1) Almost 80 percent of sentenced Department of Corrections  
5 admissions are for people returned or revoked from furlough, parole, and  
6 probation, primarily driven by furlough violators.

7 (2) Nearly one-half of Vermont's sentenced prison population at the end  
8 of FY 2019 consisted of people who were returned from community  
9 supervision, primarily furlough.

10 (3) Nearly 80 percent of furlough returns to incarceration are due to  
11 technical violations rather than new crime offenses.

12 (4) A decrease of 106 to 135 people would represent an 8–10 percent  
13 drop in the sentenced incarceration population and could mean a 40–50 percent  
14 reduction in the out-of-state contract population.

15 (5) Revocations and returns from supervision are driving a large share of  
16 prison admissions, and limited funding leaves large numbers of high-risk  
17 people without the programs and services they need to succeed in the  
18 community.

19 (6) Over the last three years, the average annual proportion of  
20 admissions to sentenced incarceration that were people returning or being  
21 revoked from furlough, parole, and probation was 78 percent.

1           (7) Vermont incarcerates more people than current facilities can  
2 accommodate and that incarceration population is growing.

3           **(b) The purpose of this act is to:**

4           (1) Improve public safety in Vermont, while creating immediate  
5 opportunities to reduce recidivism and achieve long-term savings by reducing  
6 contract bed needs significantly.

7           (2) Make evidence-based programming available to individuals  
8 transitioning back into the community in order to support their transition and  
9 reduce violations, revocations, and reincarceration.

10          (3) Streamline the furlough system to eliminate multiple furlough  
11 statuses without limiting the availability of supervision within the community  
12 for inmates.

13    \* \* \* Probation \* \* \*

14          Sec. 2. 13 V.S.A. § 7031 is amended to read:

15          § 7031. FORM OF SENTENCES; MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM TERMS

16           (a) When a respondent is sentenced to any term of imprisonment, other  
17 than for life, the court imposing the sentence shall not fix the term of  
18 imprisonment, unless the term is definitely fixed by statute, but shall establish  
19 a maximum and may establish a minimum term for which the respondent may  
20 be held in imprisonment. The maximum term shall not be more than the  
21 longest term fixed by law for the offense of which the respondent is convicted,

1 and the minimum term shall be not less than the shortest term fixed by law for  
2 the offense. If the court suspends a portion of the sentence, the unsuspended  
3 portion of the sentence shall be the minimum term of sentence solely for the  
4 purpose of any reductions of term for good behavior as set forth in 28 V.S.A.  
5 § 811. A sentence shall not be considered fixed as long as the maximum and  
6 minimum terms are not identical.

7 (b) The sentence of imprisonment of any person convicted of an offense  
8 shall commence to run from the date on which the person is received at the  
9 correctional facility for service of the sentence. The court shall give the person  
10 credit toward service of his or her sentence for any days spent in custody as  
11 follows:

12 (1) The period of credit for concurrent and consecutive sentences shall  
13 include all days served from the date of arraignment or the date of the earliest  
14 detention for the offense, whichever occurs first, and end on the date of the  
15 sentencing. Only a single credit shall be awarded in cases of consecutive  
16 sentences, and no credit for one period of time shall be applied to a later  
17 period.

18 (2) In sentencing a violation of probation, the court shall give the person  
19 credit for any days spent in custody from the time the violation is filed or the  
20 person is detained on the violation, whichever occurs first, until the violation is  
21 sentenced. In a case in which probation is revoked and the person is ordered to

1 serve the underlying sentence, the person shall receive credit for all time  
2 previously served in connection with the offense and all time served on  
3 probation prior to the time the violation is filed.

4 (3) A defendant who has received pre-adjudication treatment in a  
5 residential setting for a substance use disorder after the charge has been filed  
6 shall earn a reduction of one day in the offender's minimum and maximum  
7 sentence for each day that the offender receives the inpatient treatment.

8 (c) If any such person is committed to a jail or other place of detention to  
9 await transportation to the place at which his or her sentence is to be served,  
10 his or her sentence shall commence to run from the date on which he or she is  
11 received at the jail or the place of detention.

12 (d) A person who receives a zero minimum sentence for a conviction of a  
13 nonviolent misdemeanor or nonviolent felony as defined in 28 V.S.A. § 301  
14 shall report to probation and parole as directed by the court and begin to serve  
15 the sentence in the community immediately, unless the person is serving a  
16 prior sentence at the time.

17 Sec. 3. 28 V.S.A. § 205 is amended to read:

18 § 205. PROBATION

19 (a)(1) After passing sentence, a court may suspend all or part of the  
20 sentence and place the person so sentenced in the care and custody of the  
21 Commissioner upon such conditions and for such time as it may prescribe in

1 accordance with law or until further order of court. All terms of probation set  
2 by the court shall be for a specific duration, not to exceed the statutory  
3 maximum term of imprisonment for the offense.

4 (2) The term of probation for misdemeanors shall be for a specific term  
5 not to exceed two years unless the court, in its sole discretion, specifically  
6 finds that the interests of justice require a longer ~~or an indefinite~~ period of  
7 probation.

8 (3)(A) The term of probation for nonviolent felonies shall not exceed  
9 four years or the statutory maximum term of imprisonment for the offense,  
10 whichever is less, unless the court, in its sole discretion, specifically finds that  
11 the interests of justice require a longer ~~or an indefinite~~ period of probation.

12 (B) As used in this subdivision, “nonviolent felonies” means an  
13 offense that is not:

14 (i) a listed crime as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 5301(7); or

15 (ii) an offense involving sexual exploitation of children in  
16 violation of 13 V.S.A. chapter 64.

17 (4) Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the court from terminating  
18 the period of probation and discharging a person pursuant to section 251 of this  
19 title.

20 (5) The probation officer of a person on probation for a specific term  
21 shall review the person’s case file during probation and, not less than 45 days

1 prior to the expiration of the probation term, may file a petition with the court  
2 requesting the court to extend the period of probation for a specific term not to  
3 exceed one year in order to provide the person the opportunity to complete  
4 programming consistent with special conditions of probation. A hearing on the  
5 petition for an extension of probation under this subsection shall comply with  
6 the procedures set forth in Rule 32.1 of the Vermont Rules of Criminal  
7 Procedure.

8 (b) The victim of a listed crime as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 5301(7) for  
9 which the offender has been placed on probation shall have the right to request  
10 and receive from the Department of Corrections information regarding the  
11 offender's general compliance with the specific conditions of probation.  
12 Nothing in this section shall require the Department of Corrections to disclose  
13 any confidential information revealed by the offender in connection with  
14 participation in a treatment program.

15 (c)(1) Unless the court in its discretion finds that the interests of justice  
16 require additional standard and special conditions of probation, when the court  
17 orders a specific term of probation for a qualifying offense, the offender shall  
18 be placed on administrative probation, which means that the only conditions of  
19 probation shall be that the probationer:

20 (A) register with the Department of Corrections' probation and  
21 parole office in his or her district;

1 (B) notify the probation officer of his or her current address each  
2 month;

3 (C) within 72 hours, notify the Department of Corrections if probable  
4 cause is found for a criminal offense during the term of probation; and

5 (D) not be convicted of a criminal offense during the term of  
6 probation.

7 (2) As used in this subsection, “qualifying offense” means:

8 (A) Unlawful mischief under 13 V.S.A. § 3701.

9 (B) Retail theft under 13 V.S.A. §§ 2575 and 2577.

10 (C) Operating after suspension or revocation of license under  
11 23 V.S.A. § 674(a).

12 (D) Bad checks under 13 V.S.A. § 2022.

13 (E) Theft of services under 13 V.S.A. § 2582.

14 (F) Disorderly conduct under 13 V.S.A. § 1026, unless the original  
15 charge was a listed offense as defined in 13 V.S.A. § 5301(7).

16 (G) Theft of rented property under 13 V.S.A. § 2591.

17 (H) Operation without consent of owner under 23 V.S.A. § 1094(a).

18 (I) Petit larceny under 13 V.S.A. § 2502.

19 (J) Negligent operation of a motor vehicle under 23 V.S.A.

20 § 1091(a).

21 (K) False reports to law enforcement under 13 V.S.A. § 1754.



1 (L) Setting fires under 13 V.S.A. § 508.

2 (M) [Repealed.]

3 (N) Simple assault by mutual consent under 13 V.S.A. § 1023(b)

4 unless the original charge was a listed offense as defined in 13 V.S.A.

5 § 5301(7).

6 (O) Unlawful trespass under 13 V.S.A. § 3705(a).

7 (P) A first offense of possession under 18 V.S.A. § 4230(a)(1).

8 (3) Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a court from requiring  
9 participation in the Restorative Justice Program established in chapter 12 of  
10 this title.

11 (d)(1) A probationer shall receive one day of credit towards the  
12 probationer's minimum sentence for each day served on probation. The  
13 probationer shall cease accruing credit towards the minimum sentence the day  
14 an arrest warrant for the probationer is filed. If the court finds that the  
15 probationer violated the terms of probation and returns the person to probation,  
16 the court shall determine whether the person may again accrue credit towards  
17 the minimum sentence and when the accrual shall commence. If the court  
18 finds no violation occurred, there shall be no interruption in the probationer's  
19 accrual of credit.

1           (2) Once a probationer accrues credit equal to the maximum term of  
2           imprisonment for the offense, the court shall terminate the probation and  
3           discharge the person pursuant to section 251 of this title.

4           Sec. 4. 28 V.S.A. § 304 is amended to read:

5           § 304. DISPOSITION ALTERNATIVES UPON VIOLATION OF  
6           PROBATION

7           (a) Revocation and imposition of sentence.

8           (1) If a violation is established by a proceeding conducted in accordance  
9           with section 302 of this title, the court may, in its discretion, revoke probation  
10           and require the probationer to serve the remainder of the sentence that was  
11           suspended or order that the remainder of the sentence be served in the  
12           community pursuant to the provisions of chapter 6 of this title.

13           (2) In the event the court revokes probation and requires the probationer  
14           to serve the suspended sentence pursuant to this section, the duration of the  
15           remaining suspended sentence shall be reduced in accordance with  
16           subdivision 205(d) of this title and 13 V.S.A. § 7031(b)(2).

17           (b) Alternative sanctions. As an alternative to revocation and imposition of  
18           sentence as provided in subsection (a) of this section, the court, in its  
19           discretion, after a violation has been established, may:

20           (1) continue the probationer on the existing sentence;

1 (2) effect, in accordance with subsection 253(b) of this title, necessary  
2 or desirable changes or enlargements in the conditions of probation;

3 (3) conduct a formal or informal conference with the probationer in  
4 order to reemphasize to him or her the necessity of compliance with the  
5 conditions of probation;

6 (4) issue a formal or informal warning to the probationer that further  
7 violations may result in revocation of probation by the court; or

8 (5) continue the probationer on the existing sentence, but require the  
9 probationer to serve any portion of the sentence.

10 (c) Guidelines. Prior to ordering either revocation or an alternative  
11 sanction for a violation of probation in accordance with subsection (b) of this  
12 section, the court shall consider, but has complete discretion whether to follow,  
13 sanction guidelines established by the Department of Corrections pursuant to  
14 subsection (e) of this section.

15 (d) Discretion of the court. No plea agreement shall limit the court's  
16 discretion under this section.

17 (e) Rules. The Department of Corrections shall adopt rules pursuant to  
18 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 that establish graduated sanction guidelines for probation  
19 violations as an alternative to revocation and imposition of the remainder of  
20 the original sentence. These guidelines do not grant the Department any  
21 authority to impose sanctions for probation violations.

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\* \* \* Parole \* \* \*

Sec. 5. 28 V.S.A. § 402 is amended to read:

§ 402. DEFINITIONS

~~Whenever~~ As used in this chapter:

(1) “Parole” means the release of an inmate to the community by the Parole Board before the end of the inmate’s sentence subject to conditions imposed by the Board and subject to the supervision and control of the Commissioner. If a court or other authority files a warrant or detainer against an inmate, the Board may release him or her on parole to answer the warrant and serve any subsequent sentences.

(2) “Interview” means an appearance by the inmate at a meeting of the Parole Board.

(3) “Review” means an evaluation of an inmate’s records without an appearance by the inmate before the Parole Board.

Sec. 6. 28 V.S.A. § 501 is amended to read:

§ 501. ELIGIBILITY FOR PAROLE CONSIDERATION

~~An inmate~~ A person who is serving a sentence of imprisonment who is not eligible for presumptive parole pursuant to section 501a of this title shall be eligible for parole consideration as follows:

1           (1) If the ~~inmate's~~ person's sentence has no minimum term or a zero  
2           minimum term, the ~~inmate~~ person shall be eligible for parole consideration  
3           within 12 months after commitment to a correctional facility.

4           (2) If the ~~inmate's~~ person's sentence has a minimum term, the ~~inmate~~  
5           person shall be eligible for parole consideration after the ~~inmate~~ person has  
6           served the minimum term of the sentence.

7           (3) If the person is 65 years of age or older, is not serving a sentence of  
8           life without parole, and has served five years but not the minimum term of the  
9           sentence, the person shall be eligible for parole consideration unless the person  
10          has programming requirements that have not been fulfilled or has received a  
11          major disciplinary rule violation within the previous 12 months.

12          Sec. 7. 28 V.S.A. § 501a is added to read:

13          § 501a. PRESUMPTIVE PAROLE

14          A person who is serving a sentence of imprisonment shall be eligible for  
15          presumptive release in accordance with subsection 502a(e) of this title at the  
16          expiration of the person's minimum or aggregate minimum term of  
17          imprisonment if the person:

18                 (1) has acquired no new criminal conviction while incarcerated or on  
19                 supervision for the current offense;

20                 (2) has no outstanding warrants, detainers, commitments, or pending  
21                 charges;

1           (3) is compliant with the person’s case plan during the period of  
2           incarceration if the person is incarcerated for less than 90 days or is compliant  
3           for the 90 days preceding the completion of the person’s minimum term if the  
4           person is incarcerated for 90 days or more;

5           (4) is compliant with the conditions of the person’s supervision if the  
6           person is supervised in the community on furlough during:

7                   (A) the entire period of supervision if the term of supervision is less  
8                   than 90 days; or

9                   (B) the 90 days prior to the consideration of parole eligibility if the  
10                  term of supervision is 90 days or more;

11           (5) has no major disciplinary rule violation or pending infractions during  
12           the period of incarceration if the person is incarcerated for less than 12 months,  
13           or has no major disciplinary rule violations or pending infractions during the  
14           preceding 12 months if the person is incarcerated for 12 months or more;

15           (6) has not had parole revoked on the person’s current sentence; and

16           (7) is not serving a sentence for committing a crime specified in 13  
17           V.S.A. § 5301.

18           Sec. 8. 28 V.S.A. § 501a is amended to read:

19           § 501a. PRESUMPTIVE PAROLE

20           A person who is serving a sentence of imprisonment shall be eligible for  
21           presumptive release in accordance with subsection 502a(e) of this title at the

1 expiration of the person’s minimum or aggregate minimum term of  
2 imprisonment if the person:

3 (1) has acquired no new criminal conviction while incarcerated or on  
4 supervision for the current offense;

5 (2) has no outstanding warrants, detainers, commitments, or pending  
6 charges;

7 (3) is compliant with the person’s case plan during the period of  
8 incarceration if the person is incarcerated for less than 90 days or is compliant  
9 for the 90 days preceding the completion of the person’s minimum term if the  
10 person is incarcerated for 90 days or more;

11 (4) is compliant with the conditions of the person’s supervision if the  
12 person is supervised in the community on furlough during:

13 (A) the entire period of supervision if the term of supervision is less  
14 than 90 days; or

15 (B) the 90 days prior to the consideration of parole eligibility if the  
16 term of supervision is 90 days or more;

17 (5) has no major disciplinary rule violation or pending infractions during  
18 the period of incarceration if the person is incarcerated for less than 12 months,  
19 or has no major disciplinary rule violations or pending infractions during the  
20 preceding 12 months if the person is incarcerated for 12 months or more;

21 (6) has not had parole revoked on the person’s current sentence; and

1 (7) is not serving a sentence for committing a crime specified in ~~13~~

2 ~~V.S.A. § 5301~~ 33 V.S.A. § 5204(a).

3 Sec. 9. 28 V.S.A. § 502 is amended to read:

4 § 502. PAROLE INTERVIEWS AND REVIEWS

5 (a) The Board shall interview each inmate eligible for parole consideration  
6 under section 501 of this title before ordering the inmate released on parole.  
7 The Board shall consider all pertinent information regarding an inmate in order  
8 to determine the inmate's eligibility for parole. The Board may grant parole  
9 only after an inmate is interviewed in accordance with this section. The Parole  
10 Board may conduct the interview in person, by telephone or videoconference,  
11 or by any other method it deems appropriate.

12 (b) An initial interview of the inmate shall occur at least 30 days prior to  
13 the date when the inmate becomes eligible for parole consideration under  
14 section 501 of this title.

15 (c) An inmate eligible for parole consideration shall, subsequent to the  
16 initial interview provided for above, be reviewed and interviewed thereafter, as  
17 follows:

18 (1) If the inmate is serving a maximum sentence of less than 15 years:

19 (A) the Board shall review the inmate's record once every 12  
20 months;



1 (B) the Board shall conduct an interview of the inmate at the request  
2 of the Department; and

3 (C) upon written request of the inmate, the Board shall conduct an  
4 interview, but not more than once in any two-year period.

5 (2) If the inmate is serving a sentence with a maximum of 15 years up to  
6 a maximum of life:

7 (A) the Board shall review the inmate's record once every two years;

8 (B) the Board shall conduct an interview of the inmate at the request  
9 of the Department; and

10 (C) upon written request of the inmate, the Board may conduct an  
11 interview, but not more than once in any two-year period.

12 (d) The Board in its discretion may hear from attorneys or other persons  
13 with an interest in the case before the Board. A person presenting statements  
14 to the Board may be required to submit the statement in writing.

15 (e) Interviews and reviews shall be conducted in accordance with the rules  
16 and regulations established by the Board, which shall be consistent with this  
17 section.

18 (f) The Board ~~may~~, when formulating the conditions of a parole, shall take  
19 into consideration the emotional needs of the victim of an offender's crime  
20 plus the needs of the victim's family.

1 Sec. 10. 28 V.S.A. § 502a is amended to read:

2 § 502a. RELEASE ON PAROLE

3 (a) ~~No~~ Except as otherwise provided in subsection (d) of this section and  
4 section 502 of this title, no inmate serving a sentence with a minimum term  
5 shall be released on parole until the inmate has served the minimum term of  
6 the sentence, less any reductions for good behavior.

7 (b) An inmate who is not eligible for presumptive parole pursuant to  
8 subsection 501(b) of this title shall be released on parole by the written order  
9 of the Parole Board if the Board determines:

10 (1) the inmate is eligible for parole;

11 (2) there is a reasonable probability that the inmate can be released  
12 without detriment to the community or to the inmate; and

13 (3) the inmate is willing and capable of fulfilling the obligations of a  
14 law-abiding citizen.

15 (c) A parole under subsection (b) or (e) of this section shall be ordered only  
16 for the best interests of the community and of the inmate, and shall not be  
17 regarded as an award of clemency, a reduction of sentence, or a conditional  
18 pardon.

19 (d) Notwithstanding subsection (a) or (e) of this section, or any other  
20 provision of law to the contrary, any inmate who is serving a sentence,  
21 including an inmate who has not yet served the minimum term of the sentence,

1 who is diagnosed as having a terminal or serious medical condition so as to  
2 render the inmate unlikely to be physically capable of presenting a danger to  
3 society, may be released on medical parole to a hospital, hospice, other  
4 licensed inpatient facility, or suitable housing accommodation as specified by  
5 the Parole Board. Provided the inmate has authorized the release of his or her  
6 personal health information, the Department shall promptly notify the Parole  
7 Board upon receipt of medical information of an inmate's diagnosis of a  
8 terminal or serious medical condition. As used in this subsection, a "serious  
9 medical condition" does not mean a condition caused by noncompliance with a  
10 medical treatment plan.

11 (e)(1) The Department shall identify each inmate meeting the presumptive  
12 parole eligibility criteria in subsection 501(b) of this title and refer each  
13 eligible inmate to the Parole Board at least 60 days prior to the inmate's  
14 eligibility date.

15 (2) The Department shall recommend presumptive release for each  
16 eligible inmate unless it determines, based on clear and convincing evidence,  
17 that:

18 (A) there is a reasonable probability that the inmate cannot be  
19 released without detriment to the community; or

20 (B) the inmate is not willing and capable of fulfilling the obligations  
21 of a law-abiding citizen.

1           (3)(A) The Parole Board shall conduct an administrative review of each  
2           inmate the Department recommends for presumptive release within 30 days of  
3           the inmate’s eligibility date. The Board may deny presumptive release and set  
4           a hearing if it determines, through its administrative review, that a victim or  
5           victims should be notified and given the opportunity to participate in a parole  
6           hearing.

7           (B) The Parole Board shall conduct a parole hearing pursuant to section  
8           502 of this title for each eligible inmate that the Department determines is not  
9           appropriate for release based on the criteria in subdivision (2) of this  
10          subsection.

11                                   \* \* \* Furlough \* \* \*

12          Sec. 11. 28 V.S.A. § 808 is amended to read:

13          § 808. TEMPORARY FURLOUGHS GRANTED TO OFFENDERS

14          (a) The Department may extend the limits of the place of confinement of an  
15          offender at any correctional facility if the offender agrees to comply with such  
16          conditions of supervision the Department, in its sole discretion, deems  
17          appropriate for that offender’s furlough. The Department may authorize a  
18          temporary furlough for a defined period for any of the following reasons:

19                  (1) To visit a critically ill relative.

20                  (2) To attend the funeral of a relative.

21                  (3) To obtain medical services.

1           (4) To contact prospective employers.

2           (5) To secure a suitable residence for use upon discharge.

3           ~~(6) To continue the process of reintegration initiated in a correctional~~  
4           ~~facility. The offender may be placed in a program of conditional reentry status~~  
5           ~~by the Department upon the offender's completion of the minimum term of~~  
6           ~~sentence. While on conditional reentry status, the offender shall be required to~~  
7           ~~participate in programs and activities that hold the offender accountable to~~  
8           ~~victims and the community pursuant to section 2a of this title.~~

9           (b) An offender granted a temporary furlough pursuant to this section may  
10          be accompanied by an employee of the Department, in the discretion of the  
11          Commissioner, during the period of the offender's furlough. The Department  
12          may use electronic monitoring equipment such as global position monitoring,  
13          automated voice recognition telephone equipment, and transdermal alcohol  
14          monitoring equipment to enable more effective or efficient supervision of  
15          individuals placed on furlough.

16          (c) The extension of the limits of the place of confinement authorized by  
17          this section shall in no way be interpreted as a probation or parole of the  
18          offender, but shall constitute solely a permitted extension of the limits of the  
19          place of confinement for offenders committed to the custody of the  
20          Commissioner.

1 (d) When any enforcement officer, as defined in 23 V.S.A. § 4, employee  
2 of the Department, or correctional officer responsible for supervising an  
3 offender believes the offender is in violation of any verbal or written condition  
4 of the temporary furlough, the officer or employee may immediately lodge the  
5 offender at a correctional facility or orally or in writing deputize any law  
6 enforcement officer or agency to arrest and lodge the offender at such a  
7 facility. The officer or employee shall subsequently document the reason for  
8 taking such action.

9 (e) The Commissioner may place on medical furlough any offender who is  
10 serving a sentence, including an offender who has not yet served the minimum  
11 term of the sentence, who is diagnosed with a terminal or serious medical  
12 condition so as to render the offender unlikely to be physically capable of  
13 presenting a danger to society. The Commissioner shall develop a policy  
14 regarding the application for, standards for eligibility of, and supervision of  
15 persons on medical furlough. The offender may be released to a hospital,  
16 hospice, other licensed inpatient facility, or other housing accommodation  
17 deemed suitable by the Commissioner. As used in this subsection, a “serious  
18 medical condition” does not mean a condition caused by noncompliance with a  
19 medical treatment plan.

20 (f) ~~While appropriate community housing is an important consideration in~~  
21 ~~release of offenders, the Department shall not use lack of housing as the sole~~

1 ~~factor in denying furlough to offenders who have served at least their~~  
2 ~~minimum sentence for a nonviolent misdemeanor or nonviolent felony~~  
3 ~~provided that public safety and the best interests of the offender will be served~~  
4 ~~by reentering the community on furlough. The Department shall adopt rules to~~  
5 ~~implement this subsection. [Repealed.]~~

6 (g) ~~Subsections (b)–(f)~~ Subsection (b) of this section shall also apply to  
7 sections 808a and 808c of this title.

8 Sec. 12. 28 V.S.A. § 808a is amended to read:

9 § 808a. TREATMENT FURLOUGH

10 (a) An offender may be sentenced to serve a term of imprisonment, but  
11 placed by a court on treatment furlough to participate in such programs  
12 administered by the Department in the community that reduce the offender's  
13 risk to reoffend or that provide reparation to the community in the form of  
14 supervised work activities.

15 (b) Provided the approval of the sentencing judge is first obtained, the  
16 Department may place on treatment furlough an offender who has not yet  
17 served the minimum term of the sentence, who, in the Department's  
18 determination, needs residential treatment services not available in a  
19 correctional facility. The services may include treatment for substance abuse  
20 or personal violence or any other condition that the Department has determined  
21 should be addressed in order to reduce the offender's risk to reoffend or cause

1 harm to himself or herself or to others in the facility. The offender shall be  
2 released only to a hospital or residential treatment facility that provides  
3 services to the general population. The State's share of the cost of placement  
4 in such a facility, net of any private or federal participation, shall be paid  
5 pursuant to memoranda of agreement between and within State agencies  
6 reflective of their shared responsibilities to maximize the efficient and  
7 effective use of State resources. In the event that a memorandum of agreement  
8 cannot be reached, the Secretary of Administration shall make a final  
9 determination as to the manner in which costs will be allocated.

10 ~~(c)(1) Except as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection, the~~  
11 ~~Department, in its own discretion, may place on treatment furlough an offender~~  
12 ~~who has not yet served the minimum term of his or her sentence for an eligible~~  
13 ~~misdemeanor as defined in section 808d of this title if the Department has~~  
14 ~~made a determination based upon a risk assessment that the offender poses a~~  
15 ~~low risk to public safety or victim safety and that employing an alternative to~~  
16 ~~incarceration to hold the offender accountable is likely to reduce the risk of~~  
17 ~~recidivism.~~

18 ~~(2) Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, second offense, as~~  
19 ~~defined in 23 V.S.A. §§ 1201 and 1210(c) and boating under the influence of~~  
20 ~~alcohol or drugs, second offense, as defined in 23 V.S.A. § 3323 shall be~~



1 ~~considered eligible misdemeanors for the sole purpose of subdivision (1) of~~  
2 ~~this subsection. [Repealed.]~~

3 Sec. 13. 28 V.S.A. § 723 is amended to read:

4 § 723. ~~CONDITIONAL REENTRY~~ COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

5 FURLOUGH

6 (a) ~~When a sentenced offender has served the minimum term of the total~~  
7 ~~effective sentence, the~~ The Department may release ~~the offender~~ from a  
8 correctional facility ~~under section 808 of this title for the offender to~~  
9 participate in a reentry program while serving the remaining sentence in the  
10 community a person who:

11 (1) has served the minimum term of the person's total effective  
12 sentence;

13 (2) is ineligible for presumptive parole pursuant to section 501 of this  
14 title or has been returned or revoked to prison for a violation of conditions of  
15 parole, furlough, or probation; and

16 (3) agrees to comply with such conditions of supervision the  
17 Department, in its sole discretion, deems appropriate for that person's  
18 furlough.

19 (b) The offender's continued supervision in the community is conditioned  
20 on the offender's commitment to and satisfactory progress in his or her reentry

1 program and on the offender's compliance with any terms and conditions  
2 identified by the Department.

3 (c) Prior to release under this section, the Department shall screen and, if  
4 appropriate, assess each felony drug and property offender for substance abuse  
5 treatment needs using an assessment tool designed to assess the suitability of a  
6 broad range of treatment services, and it shall use the results of this assessment  
7 in preparing a reentry plan. The Department shall attempt to identify all  
8 necessary services in the reentry plan and work with the offender to make  
9 connections to necessary services prior to release so that the offender can begin  
10 receiving services immediately upon release.

11 Sec. 14. 28 V.S.A. § 724 is amended to read:

12 § 724. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ~~CONDITIONAL REENTRY~~  
13 COMMUNITY SUPERVISION FURLOUGH

14 (a) The Department shall identify in the terms and conditions of ~~conditional~~  
15 ~~reentry~~ community supervision furlough those programs necessary to reduce  
16 the offender's risk of reoffense and to promote the offender's accountability  
17 for progress in the reintegration process. The Department shall make all  
18 determinations of violations of conditions of community supervision furlough  
19 pursuant to this subchapter and any resulting alternative sentence or  
20 termination of community supervision furlough status.

1           **(b) Any interruption of an offender’s community supervision furlough after**  
2           **the Department has found a technical violation of furlough conditions shall**  
3           **trigger a Department Central Office case staffing review and Department**  
4           **notification of the Office of the Defender General if the interruption will**  
5           **exceed 30 days.**

6           **(c) An offender may seek review in the Civil Division of the Superior**  
7           **Court of the Department’s decision to revoke furlough or interrupt furlough for**  
8           **30 days or longer pursuant to Rule 75 of the Vermont Rules of Civil**  
9           **Procedure. The offender shall have the burden of proving by a preponderance**  
10           **of the evidence that the Department wrongfully violated the conditions of**  
11           **community supervision furlough or wrongfully imposed a furlough revocation**  
12           **or interrupt for 30 days or longer.**

13           **(d) As used in this section, “technical violation” shall mean a violation of**  
14           **conditions of furlough that does not constitute a new crime.**

15           Sec. 15. 28 V.S.A. § 725 is amended to read:

16           § 725. PAROLE HEARING FOR OFFENDERS ON ~~CONDITIONAL~~  
17           ~~REENTRY~~ COMMUNITY SUPERVISION FURLOUGH

18           (a) The Department shall submit to the Parole Board a recommendation  
19           relative to whether the offender should be released to parole pursuant to  
20           section ~~502a~~ 501 of this title when:

1 (1) an offender sentenced solely for the commission of one or more  
2 unlisted crimes has, in the sole discretion of the Department, successfully  
3 completed 90 days of community supervision furlough ~~in a conditional reentry~~  
4 ~~program~~; or

5 (2) an offender sentenced for the commission of at least one or more  
6 listed crimes has, in the sole discretion of the Department, successfully  
7 completed 180 days of community supervision ~~in a conditional reentry~~  
8 ~~program~~ furlough.

9 Sec. 16. 28 V.S.A. § 818 is amended to read:

10 § 818. EARNED GOOD TIME; REDUCTION OF TERM

11 (a) On or before July 1, 2020, the Department of Corrections shall file a  
12 proposed rule pursuant to 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 implementing an earned good  
13 time program to become effective on October 1, 2020. The Commissioner  
14 shall adopt these amendments as an emergency rule and concurrently propose  
15 them as a permanent rule. The emergency rule shall be deemed to meet the  
16 standard for the adoption of emergency rules pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 844(a).

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

19 (1) The program shall be available for all sentenced offenders, including  
20 furloughed offenders, provided that the program shall not be available to  
21 offenders on probation or parole, to offenders eligible for a reduction of term

1 pursuant to section 811 of this title, or to offenders sentenced to life without  
2 parole.

3 (2) Offenders shall earn a reduction of ~~five~~ seven days in the minimum  
4 and maximum sentence for each ~~month~~ 30 days during which the offender:

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

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

10 ~~(C) complies with a merit based system designed to incentivize~~  
11 ~~offenders to meet milestones identified by the Department that prepare~~  
12 ~~offenders for reentry, if the offender has received a sentence of greater than~~  
13 ~~one year.~~

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

20 (4) The Department shall provide timely notice ~~no~~ not less frequently  
21 than every 90 days to the offender and to any victim of record any time the

1 offender receives a reduction in his or her term of supervision pursuant to this  
2 section, and the Department shall maintain a system that documents and  
3 records all such reductions in each offender’s permanent record.

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

6 Sec. 17. 28 V.S.A. § 808d is amended to read:

7 § 808d. DEFINITION; ELIGIBLE MISDEMEANOR; ~~FURLOUGH AT~~  
8 ~~THE DISCRETION OF THE DEPARTMENT~~

9 ~~For purposes of sections 808a–808e~~ As used in section 808c of this title,  
10 “eligible misdemeanor” means a misdemeanor crime that is not one of the  
11 following crimes:

12 \* \* \*

13 Sec. 18. 28 V.S.A. § 808e is amended to read:

14 § 808e. ABSCONDING FROM FURLOUGH; WARRANT

15 (a) The Commissioner of Corrections may issue a warrant for the arrest of  
16 a person who has absconded from furlough status in violation of ~~subdivision~~  
17 subsection 808(a)(6), subsection 808(e) or 808(f), or section 808a, 808b, or  
18 808c of this title, requiring the person to be returned to a correctional facility.

19 A law enforcement officer who is provided with a warrant issued pursuant to  
20 this section shall execute the warrant and return the person who has absconded  
21 from furlough to the Department of Corrections.

1       **(b)** A person for whom an arrest warrant is issued pursuant to this section  
2 shall not earn credit toward service of his or her sentence for any days that the  
3 warrant is outstanding.

4                               \* \* \* Reports to General Assembly \* \* \*

5       Sec. 19. RACIAL DISPARITIES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM;  
6                               VERMONT SENTENCING COMMISSION; EXECUTIVE  
7                               DIRECTOR OF RACIAL EQUITY; DEPARTMENT OF  
8                               CORRECTIONS; REPORT

9       (a) During the 2020 legislative interim, the Chief Superior Judge, the  
10 Attorney General, the Defender General, the Department of Corrections, and  
11 the Executive Director of the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs  
12 shall work with Crime Research Group to identify existing data that explores  
13 the relationships between demographic factors and sentencing outcomes and  
14 determine whether and where current data systems and collections are  
15 insufficient for additional analyses and what staffing or resources are needed to  
16 support more robust reporting. Relevant data shall include plea agreements,  
17 sentence types and length, criminal history, offense severity, and any other  
18 metric that may further identify differences in how people are charged and  
19 sentenced by county, race, and gender. Each stakeholder identified in this  
20 subsection shall report their findings to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight  
21 Committee on or before October 1, 2020.

1        (b)(1) During the 2020 legislative interim, the Vermont Sentencing

2        Commission shall:

3                (A) analyze sentencing patterns across the State to identify where the  
4        use and length of incarceration may result in or exacerbate racial disparities;  
5        and

6                (B) work with the Executive Director of Racial Equity and the Racial  
7        Disparities in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice System Advisory Panel in  
8        identifying the types of offenses for which there are racial and geographic  
9        disparities in sentencing and propose standardized sentencing guidance for  
10       those offenses.

11               (2) The Commission shall work with the Crime Research Group for the  
12       analyses pursuant to this section.

13               (3) On or before December 1, 2020, the Commission shall provide an  
14       interim report to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee with the  
15       results of its work pursuant to this subsection. On or before January 15, 2021,  
16       the Commission shall provide its final report on its work pursuant to this  
17       subsection to the House and Senate Committees on Judiciary and the House  
18       Committee on Corrections and Institutions.



1       Sec. 20. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS PROGRAMMING

2                       WORKING GROUP

3               (a) During the 2020 legislative interim, the Chief Superior Judge, the  
4               Defender General, the Department of Corrections, and the Executive Director  
5               of the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs shall work with the  
6               Council of State Governments to:

7                       (1) identify tools to assist in identifying specific offender risk factors  
8               that can be targeted with services and treatment programs based on evidence-  
9               based practices shown to be effective in reducing recidivism;

10                      (2) determine how to share information about risk assessments and  
11               available programming among each other to inform plea agreement,  
12               sentencing, and probation revocation decisions; and

13                      (3) on or before January 15, 2021, report to the House and Senate  
14               Committees on Judiciary and the House Committee on Corrections and  
15               Institutions regarding suggested legislation to ensure sentencing, revocation,  
16               and plea agreement decisions are informed by available programming and  
17               individual risk assessment information.

1                   \* \* \* Appropriation, Repeals, and Effective Dates \* \* \*

2           Sec. 21. JUSTICE REINVESTMENT II APPROPRIATION

3           (a) In FY20, \$2,000,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
4           Agency of Human Services to fund Justice Reinvestment II investments as  
5           follows:

6                   (1) \$400,000.00 is reserved for risk-based domestic violence  
7                   intervention programming available in communities that are certified by the  
8                   Vermont Council on Domestic Violence, and statewide coordination of those  
9                   efforts through the Vermont Council on Domestic Violence. On or before  
10                   January 15, 2021, the Vermont Network against Domestic and Sexual  
11                   Violence will provide an interim report to the House and Senate Committees  
12                   on Judiciary and the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions on  
13                   progress related to outcome indicators for domestic violence accountability  
14                   programming. On or before January 15, 2022, the Network shall provide a  
15                   final report to the same committees.

16                   (2) \$1,000,000.00 is reserved for new evidence-based transitional  
17                   housing programming.

18                   (3) The remainder is reserved for evidence-based programming for  
19                   offenders transitioning back into the community, including workforce  
20                   development and other community reentry supports.

1        (b) The General Assembly intends that this appropriation of onetime funds  
2        is to immediately invest funds to reduce recidivism and increase public safety,  
3        and for savings achieved in and FY21 as a result of the legislative action taken  
4        in this act to be used to fund these investments in FY22 and in the future.

5        Sec. 22. REPEALS

6        28 V.S.A. § 808b (home confinement furlough) and 28 V.S.A. § 808c  
7        (reintegration furlough) are repealed on July 1, 2020.

8        Sec. 23. EFFECTIVE DATES

9        (a) This section and Secs. 16 (earned good time; reduction of term), 21  
10       (appropriation), and 22 (repeals) shall take effect on passage.

11       (b) Sec. 8 (presumptive parole) shall take effect on January 1, 2023.

12       (c) All other sections shall take effect on January 1, 2021.