

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

2 The Committee on Ways and Means to which was referred House Bill
3 No. 703 entitled “An act relating to promoting workforce development”
4 respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends that the
5 report of the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development be
6 amended by striking out Sec. 6, justice-involved individuals; workforce
7 development; pilot program, in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof a new
8 Sec. 6 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 6. INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS; WORKFORCE
10 DEVELOPMENT; PILOT PROGRAM

11 (a) Purpose. The purpose of this section is to facilitate the education and
12 vocational training of incarcerated individuals so that they have a greater
13 likelihood of obtaining gainful employment and positively contributing to
14 society upon reintegration into the community.

15 (b) Policy; appropriations.

16 (1)(A) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$420,000.00 is appropriated
17 from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections, in consultation with
18 the Vermont Department of Labor, to address education and vocational
19 enhancement needs. These funds shall not be allocated from any amounts
20 budgeted for Justice Reinvestment II initiatives.

1 (B) The Department shall use the funds allocated for the development
2 of education and vocational training for incarcerated individuals residing in a
3 Vermont correctional facility prior to community reintegration. The
4 Department may allocate the funds over three years, consistent with the
5 following:

6 (i) \$270,000.00 for transition development, including equipment
7 and mobile labs in one or more sites;

8 (ii) \$100,000.00 for training partner support; and

9 (iii) \$50,000.00 for curriculum development.

10 (2) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$300,000.00 is appropriated from
11 the General Fund to the Department of Corrections, which may be allocated
12 over not more than three years, to establish a community-based pilot reentry
13 program at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility in consultation with
14 the Vermont Department of Labor. The Department of Corrections shall
15 designate a service provider to administer the pilot program's goals to:

16 (A) provide continuity of services for incarcerated individuals;

17 (B) expand current employment readiness programs within the
18 facility by building pathways for coordinated transition to employment;

19 (C) focus on the first six months after individuals are released from
20 the facility;

1 (D) coordinate with local community resources, parole and probation
2 offices, and other supports to ensure successful transition into the community;

3 (E) assist individuals in successfully transitioning into new jobs; and

4 (F) work with employers to support successful hiring and best
5 practices to support incarcerated individuals.

6 (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections
7 shall create and submit a report on workforce and education training programs
8 in correctional facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee;
9 the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on Commerce and
10 Economic Development; and the Senate Committees on Economic
11 Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Judiciary. The report shall:

12 (1) identify program design, logistical needs, and policy changes to
13 current Department of Corrections facility-based training and educational
14 programs necessary to successfully enable incarcerated individuals'
15 reintegration into their communities, including changes to programs that
16 enhance individuals' skill development, knowledge, and other support needed
17 to qualify for and secure a position in a critical occupation in Vermont;

18 (2) identify disparities of outcomes and recommend solutions for
19 incarcerated Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color concerning facility-based
20 training, educational programming, and successful community reintegration;

1 (3) provide an update on the Department of Corrections’ use of
2 education and vocational enhancement funding in fiscal year 2023;

3 (4) provide recommendations on what aspects of the pilot program
4 should be replicated in other correctional facilities in Vermont; and

5 (5) provide recommended legislation for the continuation of the pilot
6 program or any changes.

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10 (Committee vote: _____)

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Representative _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE