

1 TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

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

15 (b) Policy; appropriations.

16 (1)(A) In fiscal year 2023, the amount of \$420,000.00 of the funds  
17 appropriated to the Department of Corrections shall be allocated [to establish a  
18 pilot program] to address education and vocational enhancement needs. These  
19 funds shall not be allocated from any amounts budgeted for Justice  
20 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 correctional facility prior to community reintegration. The Department may  
4 allocate the funds over three years, consistent with the following:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 (c) Report. On or before January 15, 2023, the Department of Corrections  
4 shall create and submit a report on Workforce and Education Training  
5 Programs in Correctional Facilities to the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight  
6 Committee; the House Committees on Corrections and Institutions and on  
7 Commerce and Economic Development; and the Senate Committees on  
8 Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs and on Judiciary. The  
9 report shall:

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

16 (2) identify disparities of outcomes and recommend solutions for  
17 incarcerated BIPOC individuals concerning facility-based training, educational  
18 programming, and successful community reintegration;

19 (3) provide an update on the Department of Corrections' use of  
20 education and vocational enhancement funding in fiscal year 2023; and

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

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

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12           (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Representative \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE