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HOUSE BILL NO. 951

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled January 8, 2014

A BILL to amend and reenact § 53.1-136 of the Code of Virginia, relating to parole board; parole review; required release.

Patrons—Sickles and Kory

Referred to Committee on Militia, Police and Public Safety

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 53.1-136 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 53.1-136. Powers and duties of Board; notice of release of certain inmates.**

In addition to the other powers and duties imposed upon the Board by this article, the Board shall:

1. Adopt, subject to approval by the Governor, general rules governing the granting of parole and eligibility requirements, which shall be published and posted for public review;

2. (a) Release on parole for such time and upon such terms and conditions as the Board shall prescribe, persons convicted of felonies and confined under the laws of the Commonwealth in any correctional facility in Virginia when those persons become eligible and are found suitable for parole, according to those rules adopted pursuant to subdivision 1;

(b) Establish the conditions of postrelease supervision authorized pursuant to §§ 18.2-10 and 19.2-295.2 A;

(c) Notify by certified mail at least 21 business days prior to release on discretionary parole of any inmate convicted of a felony and sentenced to a term of 10 or more years, the attorney for the Commonwealth in the jurisdiction where the inmate was sentenced. In the case of parole granted for medical reasons, where death is imminent, the Commonwealth's Attorney may be notified by telephone or other electronic means prior to release. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to alter the obligations of the Board under § 53.1-155 for investigation prior to release;

(d) In any case where a person who is released on parole or postrelease supervision has been committed to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services under the provisions of Chapter 9 (§ 37.2-900 et seq.) of Title 37.2, the conditions of his parole or postrelease supervision shall include the requirement that the person comply with all conditions given him by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, and that he follow all of the terms of his treatment plan;

3. Revoke parole and any period of postrelease and order the reincarceration of any parolee or felon serving a period of postrelease supervision or impose a condition of participation in any component of the Statewide Community-Based Corrections System for State-Responsible Offenders (§ 53.1-67.2 et seq.) on any eligible parolee, when, in the judgment of the Board, he has violated the conditions of his parole, postrelease supervision or is otherwise unfit to be on parole or on postrelease supervision;

4. Issue final discharges to persons released by the Board on parole when the Board is of the opinion that the discharge of the parolee will not be incompatible with the welfare of such person or of society;

5. Make investigations and reports with respect to any commutation of sentence, pardon, reprieve or remission of fine or penalty when requested by the Governor;

6. Publish monthly a statement regarding the action taken by the Board on the parole of prisoners. The statement shall list the name of each prisoner considered for parole and indicate whether parole was granted or denied, as well as the basis for denial of parole as described in subdivision 2 (a); and

7. Ensure that each person eligible for parole receives a timely and thorough review of his suitability for release on parole, including a review of any relevant post-sentencing information. If parole is denied, the basis for the denial of parole shall be in writing and shall give specific reasons for such denial to such inmate. *For any person eligible for parole whose time served, including earned sentence credits and good conduct credits, has exceeded the midpoint of the most recent discretionary sentencing guidelines established by the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission pursuant to § 17.1-806 for the same or similar offense, the Board shall order release unless (i) it is of the opinion that release should be deferred because there is a substantial risk that such person will not conform to the conditions of parole and (ii) it issues a reasoned decision explaining the basis for such decision.*

INTRODUCED

HB951