



PA 19-84—sSB 831

Judiciary Committee

**AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO SPECIAL PAROLE
AND PAROLE DISCHARGE STATUTES**

SUMMARY: This act requires the Judicial Branch’s Office of Victim Services (OVS) to notify certain crime victims that the Board of Pardons and Paroles intends to consider ending a person’s special parole period. It allows the victims to submit a statement to the board about whether the special parole should end. Under the act, OVS’s notification responsibility applies to victims registered with it or the Department of Correction’s (DOC) Victim Services Unit. “Victims” include the crime victim, his or her legal representative, or a deceased victim’s designee or immediate family member.

The act also establishes a board panel and review process for special parole that is separate and distinct from the regular parole review process (see BACKGROUND).

Lastly, the act makes minor, technical, and conforming changes, including (1) providing that the board has independent decision-making authority to release someone on parole or eligible for parole or end someone’s special parole; (2) eliminating a requirement that a parolee’s or inmate’s discharge certificate be signed by the board’s chairman and the DOC commissioner; and (3) updating language in the discharge statutes to replace the term “convict” with “person on parole.”

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the victim notification provision is effective October 1, 2019.

BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES

Review Panel Composition

Existing law, unchanged by the act, sets the composition of each parole release panel at three members, one of whom must serve as the chairperson or designate a full time member to temporarily serve in that role. The act explicitly sets these requirements for the composition of panels that (1) discharge people on parole from DOC custody or (2) end a person’s period of special parole.

The act also eliminates a requirement that at least three board members are present at each parole release hearing.

Conditions

By law, the board review panel can declare a parolee or inmate who is eligible for parole or special parole to be discharged from DOC custody if the panel

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believes that the person will lead an orderly life. The panel must make the decision by a unanimous vote of all members present at a regular panel meeting. The act specifies that the decision to end a period of special parole can occur at any time during the special parole period (i.e., before the person completes the period).

Certificate

By law, when a parolee or inmate is declared discharged from DOC custody, the review panel's chairperson must issue a certificate under the board's seal to that effect. The act eliminates a requirement that the certificate must also be signed by the board's chairperson and the DOC commissioner.

BACKGROUND

Parole

"Parole" is a decision by the board to release an inmate from prison prior to completing his or her maximum prison sentence. The offender then serves the remainder of the sentence under parole supervision.

Special Parole

"Special parole" is part of the sentence that a judge can impose when someone is convicted of a crime. It is a period of parole supervision after an offender completes his or her maximum prison sentence, generally, between one and 10 years. However, the court can impose a period of more than 10 years on certain offenders (e.g., persistent, dangerous felony offenders) (CGS § 54-125e).