OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6723

AN ACT CONCERNING REFORM OF PAROLE RELEASE AND REVOCATION PRACTICES AND THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES.

SUMMARY

Starting July 1, 2020, this bill increases the number of full-time members on the Board of Pardons and Paroles from 10 to 12 and requires that (1) one full-time member be a person who was formerly incarcerated and had a hearing before the board’s panel and (2) another full-time member be a crime victim.

The bill requires the board to publish quarterly on its website statistics derived from decisions it made during the previous quarter (see BACKGROUND). The statistics must be broken down by (1) race and gender; (2) length of sanctions for criminal versus technical violations; and (3) parole denial, or parole or special parole rescission or revocation outcomes (see BACKGROUND).

The bill also requires the board to:

1. track, analyze, and publish data on the costs associated with parole or special parole revocation or rescission, including jobs and housing the parolees lost (the bill does not specify a deadline for this publication);

2. implement evidence-informed strategies to reduce incarceration for people who have their parole or special parole rescinded or revoked (the bill does not specify a deadline for this implementation); and

3. limit parole or special parole rescission or revocation due to violations attributable to the person’s drug or alcohol dependence.
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

BACKGROUND

Board of Pardons and Paroles Decisions

By law, the board has independent decision-making authority to:

1. grant or deny parole or special parole,
2. set conditions of parole or special parole supervision,
3. rescind or revoke parole or special parole,
4. grant punishment commutations or conditioned or absolute releases for convicted offenders, and
5. grant death penalty commutations (CGS § 54-124a(f)).

Special Parole

“Special parole” is parole ordered by the court as part of the sentence when someone is convicted of a crime. The judge can require a period of special parole after an offender completes his or her maximum prison sentence if it determines, based on certain factors, that special parole is necessary to ensure public safety. Generally, the special parole period must be between one and 10 years. However, the court can impose a period of more than 10 years on certain sexual assault or persistent offenders (CGS § 54-125e).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 37  Nay 1  (04/09/2019)