OLR Bill Analysis
HB 6883

AN ACT CONCERNING A "CORRECTIONS TO COLLEGE PROGRAM" AT REGIONAL COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGES FOR YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) and the Department of Correction (DOC) to jointly establish a “Corrections to College Program” to assist youthful offenders (see BACKGROUND) with community reentry. The program must include mentorship and education and career counseling.

BOR and DOC must create the program by January 1, 2020, and report on it to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement and Judiciary committees by January 1, 2021.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

CORRECTIONS TO COLLEGE PROGRAM

The bill requires the Corrections to College Program to include:

1. mentorship eligibility beginning six months prior to the youthful offender’s release from incarceration, including informing him or her of available fields of study at the regional community-technical colleges and financial counseling; and

2. assignment of an education and career counselor to a youthful offender aged 21 or younger who enrolls in a regional community-technical college after release from incarceration, to promote successful program completion.

Under the bill, the assigned education and career counselor must oversee that the youthful offender completes (1) at least 10 sessions of outpatient mental health counseling or therapy to help him or her
adjust to community reentry, (2) at least 25 hours of unpaid community service during the first 12-month period in which he or she is enrolled at the regional community-technical college, and (3) life-skills or parenting training classes, if applicable.

BACKGROUND

Youthful Offender

Existing law allows a minor aged 15 to 17 charged with certain crimes to be prosecuted as a youthful offender. To qualify as a youthful offender, the minor must not be charged with certain crimes (such as a class A felony) and cannot have any prior felony convictions or certain juvenile adjudications. A youthful offender’s records are erased once the minor reaches age 21 if he or she has completed any required supervision or commitment from the case and has no later felony convictions (CGS § 54-76b, et seq.).

Related Bills

SB 6921, reported favorably by the Labor Committee, generally prohibits discrimination based on a person’s criminal history, and among other things, requires the state higher education system’s policies to ensure that no person is denied the opportunity for higher education based on their criminal record.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 18  Nay 4  (03/14/2019)