
OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6875

AN ACT CONCERNING THE ISSUANCE OF AN IDENTITY CARD OR MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENSE TO A PERSON BEING DISCHARGED FROM A CORRECTIONAL FACILITY.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Correction (DOC) and Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioners to proactively help incarcerated individuals to ensure that they have a state identity card or driver's license when they are released from a correctional facility.

Under current law, the commissioners must ensure an incarcerated individual possesses the card or license if he or she requests and qualifies for it and pays any associated fee. The bill instead (1) requires the commissioners to do so unless the person indicates, in writing, on a DOC commissioner-prescribed form, that he or she does not want a card or license and (2) imposes deadlines by which the commissioners must start helping incarcerated individuals get necessary documentation. It also eliminates the requirement that the commissioners give this help within available appropriations.

As under current law, the bill's provisions apply to those released from a correctional facility after serving any part of a prison term for a misdemeanor or felony conviction.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

STATE IDENTITY CARD AND DRIVER'S LICENSE

When a person is taken into DOC custody, the bill requires the DOC commissioner, in consultation and collaboration with the DMV commissioner, to determine whether the person has a current state identity card or driver's license and, if so, the date it expires.

For any incarcerated individual who wants an initial state identity card or driver's license or to renew or obtain a duplicate one for a lost card or license, the DOC commissioner, in consultation and collaboration with the DMV commissioner, must:

1. at least 24 months before the person's discharge date, determine the documentation necessary for the card or license and facilitate the process to enable the person to quickly get this documentation by providing access to any forms, fees, fee waivers, notary services, and mailing-related needs;
2. at least 13 months before the person's discharge date, to similarly enable him or her to quickly get any more required documentation or photographs by providing the same access as listed above and a way to get required photographs; and
3. make any required licensing exam available to the person seeking a driver's license, except for the required DMV road test.

For those in prison on a life sentence, the timeframes are the same as above but based on the person's earliest eligibility date for parole, rather than the discharge date. The commissioner must also immediately begin the process for getting necessary documentation when any such person's sentence is reduced and the reduced sentence results in a discharge date within these timeframes.

Under the bill, when a person is released from a correctional facility DOC must give the card or license to anyone who has successfully obtained it.

ANNUAL REPORT

By July 1, 2024, the DOC commissioner must begin annually reporting to the Judiciary Committee on:

1. the total number of formerly incarcerated individuals who were issued original, renewal, or duplicate state identity cards and driver's licenses, separated by card and license and examination type;

2. the total number of cards and licenses issued to individuals in each individual correctional facility; and
3. any issues DOC encounters in implementing the bill along with any recommendations for resolving the problems or improving the bill's provisions.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 37 Nay 0 (03/27/2023)