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FACT SHEET 2017

HB 1504

## HB 1504 Ensures that Probationers Can Better Meet Their Probation Conditions And Remain Productive at Work, While Protecting Employers' Time

*This bill will reduce technical revocations, thus saving taxpayer dollars, and strengthen the Texas workforce.*

### COMMUNITY SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS AND SCHEDULING

Sentencing courts often require people on community supervision (probation) to complete various programs and adhere to numerous stipulations, including holding a steady job, attending school, performing community service, and participating in treatment programs. **Additionally, a person on community supervision is required to regularly meet with a probation officer.**

**Probationers who are employed can have difficulty reporting to their probation officers** because they often work minimum wage or hourly jobs with little flexibility.

**Failing to regularly report to a probation officer can result in a person's revocation to jail or prison.** In 2016, there were almost 23,000 revocations of people on felony probation, and 12,000 of those were due to *technical* violations<sup>1</sup> – like missing a probation meeting (not committing a new offense). Typically after a revocation, a person is sent to state jail or prison, which is much more costly than community supervision. In 2016, it cost the state \$61.63 per person per day to house someone in prison, compared to only \$1.78 per person per day to place someone on community supervision.<sup>2</sup>

### IN SHORT

- HB 1504 will require probation departments to adopt a policy to take into consideration a person's work schedule when planning meetings with probation officers.
- HB 1504 will reduce technical revocations, thus reducing recidivism rates and saving taxpayer dollars.
- HB 1504 will keep more people at work, strengthening Texas' workforce.

### COST-SAVING AND PUBLIC SAFETY-DRIVEN SOLUTION: SUPPORT HB 1504 BY REPRESENTATIVE ALMA ALLEN

- **HB 1504 requires community supervision departments to adopt a policy regarding the scheduling of meetings for people on community supervision.** This policy requires community supervision officers to take into consideration the person's work, treatment, or community supervision schedule when scheduling meetings.
- **This bill will hold people accountable while on community supervision.** Reducing scheduling conflicts will allow individuals to maintain steady employment (which is typically a required probation condition) and still meet regularly with their community supervision officer.
- **Individuals who are successful on community supervision have lower rates of re-offending than those who are revoked.** People on community supervision are less likely to recidivate than people leaving state jails. The rearrest rate three years after release for those in state jails is 62.7%, compared to only 35.9% for people on felony community supervision.<sup>3</sup>
- **HB 1504 will strengthen Texas' workforce by ensuring that probationers can remain productive at work without requiring regular time off to meet with their community supervision officer.** Employers will be able to count on their employees' attendance, thus incentivizing the hiring of probationers.

## Citations

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<sup>1</sup> Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Report to the Governor and Legislative Budget Board on the Monitoring of Community Supervision Diversion Funds (December 1, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Legislative Budget Board, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Uniform Cost Report: Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016 (January 2017), 4, 6, [http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Documents/Publications/Policy\\_Report/3137\\_UniformCosts\\_2017.pdf](http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Documents/Publications/Policy_Report/3137_UniformCosts_2017.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Legislative Budget Board, Statewide Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recidivism and Revocation Rates (January 2017), [http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Documents/Publications/Policy\\_Report/3138\\_Stwide\\_Crim\\_Just\\_Recid\\_Revoc.pdf](http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Documents/Publications/Policy_Report/3138_Stwide_Crim_Just_Recid_Revoc.pdf)