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 violations¹ – 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.²

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.³

- 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.

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.
Citations

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