

HB 728 -- GOOD TIME CREDIT

SPONSOR: Collins

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Crime and Public Safety by a vote of 13 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 8 to 0.

This bill modifies provisions authorizing certain offenders committed to the Department of Corrections to receive good time credit. Good time credit is time that, once earned, must be subtracted from the offender's minimum eligibility-for-release date.

This bill provides that certain offenders must receive good time credit for completion of eligible programs. However, the accumulation of good time credit does not require that the offender be released; the parole board retains discretion to determine the date of release.

The bill provides that any major conduct violation or the accumulation of minor conduct violations exceeding six in one year will result in the loss of all credit earned. No offender who has been sentenced to death or life without probation or parole is eligible for good time credit.

The Department must award credit between five and 360 days for programs and activities to any qualifying offender who successfully:

- (1) Receives a high school diploma or equivalent, college diploma, or a vocational training certificate;
- (2) Completes an alcohol or drug abuse treatment program, excluding those treatment programs ordered by either the court or parole board;
- (3) Completes 1,000 hours of restorative justice; or
- (4) Completes other programs provided under the Department's policy.

This bill is similar to HB 2203 (2024) and HB 372 (2023).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill aims to encourage offender rehabilitation and to ensure a fair process in providing good time credit for offenders to help them reintegrate into society effectively and rehabilitate successfully. Department of

Corrections has a plethora of programs spread out across all 19 facilities, and this will help offenders obtain the skills they need to be productive members of society. This helps them reduce their time served, but it also provides emotional, societal and educational skills. The Parole Board still has full discretion to determine an offender's actual release date. The bill also ensures accountability, because it allows for the removal of good time credit if the offender engages in poor behavior or receives conduct violations. The worst sentence you can punish a person to is the deprivation of hope. Over 90% of people who are incarcerated have a release date, so we need to think about what state we want offenders to be released in. We should want them to be released with skills, not more trauma. Restorative justice classes in prison are not mandatory, so even offenders who have life without parole sentences participate in those programs because they want to learn how to be better people and better members of their communities.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Collins; Missouri Catholic Conference; Amanda Cheely; Sheena Eastburn, Show Me Justice For All; Michelle Smith, Missouri Justice Coalition; Russell Marks; James Figueroa-Robnett Jr., Missouri NAACP State Conference.

OPPONENTS: There were no oppositions voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.