

HB 2302 -- INMATE RELEASE FROM THE CUSTODY OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

SPONSOR: Oehlerking

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 14 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Administrative by a vote of 11 to 0.

This bill requires the Department of Corrections to provide certain inmates, as specified in the bill, with relevant documentation to assist in obtaining post-release employment.

The Department must coordinate with the Department of Revenue to provide a state-issued identification card if the inmate does not have a current one.

Nine months prior to an inmate's release from custody, the Department of Corrections will determine whether the inmate has a current state ID and, if not, begin gathering the required documentation to receive one. A certified birth certificate and a Department of Corrections-issued record card will be valid identification documentation for an inmate to obtain a state ID

State-issued ID cards issued with a record card from the Department of Corrections must be valid for a period of four years and are nonrenewable and nontransferable.

The Department of Corrections can utilize any funds to cover the purchase of ID cards, including but not limited to, inmate trust funds, existing funds of the Department, and donations.

The Department must provide an inmate with the types of documentation specified in the bill to assist in post-release employment.

This bill is similar to HB 2502 (2024).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this codifies a current practice of the Department of Revenue and the Department of Corrections to supply inmates with identification upon release from prison. This is a critical and practical need for people returning to communities to assist in gaining employment, and it removes preventable barriers, which helps reduce recidivism. Reducing recidivism reduces incarceration costs, and the bill gives people

an equal opportunity to succeed. This is an evidence-based, low-cost option to improve outcomes. It is sometimes difficult to get documents in a timely manner, so codifying this may help.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Oehlerking; Recycling Grace Women's Center; James Figueroa-Robnett Jr, National Association For the Missouri Conference of the Advancement of Color People; Responsive Government Action; Americans For Prosperity; Missouri Catholic Conference; American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri; and Arnie Dienoff.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition 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.