

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1377
By: Dutton
Corrections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been suggested that many offenders who have paid for their crimes in the justice system often continue to face collateral consequences long after their sentences have ended. Recent studies report instances in which those with criminal convictions face restrictions on voting rights, public benefits, housing, and employment. C.S.H.B. 1377 seeks to address this issue by creating a commission to review state laws that may restrict the rights or activities of persons convicted of a felony offense and to make certain recommendations regarding those laws.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1377 creates a commission to study and review all state laws that restrict the rights or activities of persons convicted of a felony offense, including the right to vote, the right to serve on a grand or petit jury, and eligibility for certain occupational licenses. The bill requires the commission to evaluate all such laws and to make recommendations to the legislature regarding the repeal or amendment of laws that are identified as being overly restrictive or not otherwise serving the best interest of justice. The bill provides for the composition and appointment of the nine-member commission and the designation of the commission's presiding officer. The bill establishes that a member of the commission is not entitled to compensation or reimbursement of expenses and requires the commission to meet at the presiding officer's call. The bill requires the commission, not later than November 1, 2020, to report its findings and recommendations to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, the Supreme Court of Texas, and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals and to include in its recommendations any specific statutes it recommends repealing or amending. The bill's provisions expire and the commission is abolished December 31, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1377 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute decreases the number of members appointed to the commission by the chief justice of the Texas Supreme Court from two to one and increases the number of members appointed to the commission by the presiding judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals from one to two.