



SB2129, HB3373: EARNED REENTRY

Chief Sponsors: Sen. Villanueva, Rep. Ammons

PROBLEM

Unlike most states, Illinois has no regular mechanism to review people for parole. As a result, our prisons are filled with people who have already been incarcerated for decades and have transformed their lives, but for whom Illinois has no option but to warehouse.

If nothing changes, Illinois taxpayers will continue to be billed for needless incarceration while thousands of Illinoisans will be required to grow old and die behind bars, when they could be contributing to their families and communities.

SOLUTION

The Earned Reentry bill provides a safe and fair mechanism for evaluating people with long sentences and allowing them to return to their families and communities when they are ready.

The bill takes a crucial step toward fulfilling Article 1 Section 11 of the Illinois Constitution, which says that all penalties should aim to restore people to useful citizenship.

The Earned Reentry Bill provides a safety valve for

- people convicted as youth and young adults who have since aged out of crime, but who have been excluded from other reforms;
- elderly people; and
- the numerous people who, after decades of extreme sentencing, have been unjustly sentenced to die in prison--a very disproportionate number (two-thirds) of whom are Black people.

CORE PROVISION

Establishes that a person is eligible to be reviewed for Earned Reentry by the Prisoner Review Board (PRB) when they have served at least 20 consecutive years in prison.

To be fair to all people who have been incarcerated for decades without review, the bill has a graduated implementation schedule. In the 1st year of the bill's enactment, people who have served 35+ years are eligible, in the 2nd year, people with 25+ years are eligible; starting the 3rd year and thereafter, everyone who has served 20+ years is eligible for review.

BENEFITS

Gives people convicted as youth and young adults hope and an incentive to transform their lives. Gives them chances for review before they become elderly, when they can still work and support themselves and their families.

Allows elderly people (who cost the state up to \$100,000 each a year to incarcerate) opportunities to spend their last years with loved-ones.

Allows all people who have been incarcerated for decades and demonstrated rehabilitation to be evaluated for reentry based on who they are now.

Builds stronger communities by reuniting families, allowing grown children to heal from parental incarceration, and giving formerly incarcerated people the chance to take care of elderly parents.

\$44K

Average cost of incarceration per year per person in Illinois

\$2.3K

Cost per person per year of mandatory supervised release

OVER \$115M

Estimated 10-year cost savings*

*January 2022 report by the Illinois Sentencing Advisory Council