

- SUBJECT:** Deadline for TDCJ to get information to parole officers
- COMMITTEE:** Corrections — favorable, with amendment
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Hightower, Gray, Culberson, Farrar, Pitts, Telford  
0 nays  
3 absent — Allen, Longoria, Serna
- WITNESSES:** For — None  
Against — None  
On — Melinda Bozarth, Texas Department of Criminal Justice; Alex McAlmon, State Comptroller of Public Accounts.
- BACKGROUND:** The Code of Criminal Procedure requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice’s institutional division to provide certain information about parolees and persons released to mandatory supervision to the pardons and paroles division. These case summaries contain such information as a parolee’s offense, time served, address upon release, substance abuse data and employment information.  
  
The institutional division is required to provide certain documents to the pardons and parole division upon request. Among these are items are a copy of the judgment entered and any order revoking probation and imposing a sentence, any amounts owed for restitution, fines and court costs, a written report that includes the nature and seriousness of each offense, a copy of the victim impact statement and a copy of the presentence or postsentence investigation report.
- DIGEST:** HB 253, as amended, would require the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to make the required documents available to the pardons and paroles immediately upon release of a defendant. The pardons and paroles division would be required to provide a parole officer a comprehensive summary report of information contained in the documents within 14 days after release.  
  
The summary report would include a current photograph and complete set of fingerprints of the offender. The photograph and fingerprints of the

offender would be filed with the sheriff of the county where the parolee is assigned, if requested in writing, if the offender was assigned to a county other than the one where the offender was sentenced.

The bill would take effect September 1, 1995.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

HB 253 is needed so that parole officers receive the necessary background information about new parolees under their responsibility. Parole officers should have complete information on a new parolee within at least two weeks after being released.

Parole officers do not always receive complete information on a new parolee, and the lack of appropriate knowledge and background can sometimes pose a safety threat to citizens. The parole officer in many cases has to create a file on the parolee, an administrative task that should not have to be duplicated and is a waste of time and taxpayers' money.

A report issued in April 1994 by the Texas Performance Review stated that parole officers should receive the following critical information to allow them to perform their job effectively and safely for the public:

- copies of offender's criminal histories ("rap sheets") prepared by local police.
- copies of presentence investigation reports (PSIs) that detail important information such as circumstances of the arrest, offender's prior criminal and social history and the amount of victim restitution necessary. Judges review such information on PSIs reports in determining sentencing for the offender. TDCJ pays the community supervision and corrections departments (CSCDs) \$80 for each PSI report, yet parole officers rarely receive the information.
- victim impact statements, which provide important information for monitoring parolee's behavior patterns and criminal history. Without this information, a parole officer would not know the history and prior offenses of the parolee.

Institutional division case summaries are mainly self-reported, and the information, related by offenders to division employees, is not always verified. These summaries also lack details on the nature, severity and

circumstances of the parolee's offense ,and the report does not include offenses dismissed during plea bargaining.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The committee amendment would add the requirement for fingerprints and photograph and the provisions about filing them with the sheriff.