

- SUBJECT:** Studying the assessments used to make parole decisions
- COMMITTEE:** Corrections — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — White, Allen, S. Davis, Romero, Sanford, Schaefer, Tinderholt
0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Doots Dufours, Diocese of Austin; Greg Glod, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Andy Kahan, Victim Advocate City of Houston; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Nicholas Hudson, American Civil Liberties Union of Texas; Douglas Smith, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Jeff Heckler, Texas Probation Association)

Against — Jorge Renaud, Texas Advocates for Justice; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Reginald Smith, Communities for Recovery; Latosha Taylor, Grassroots Leadership; Lauren Johnson)

On — David Gutierrez and Tim McDonnell, Board of Pardons and Paroles
- BACKGROUND:** Government Code, sec. 508.144 requires the Board of Pardons and Paroles to develop guidelines to determine whether an inmate should be granted parole. The guidelines score each inmate based on a number of factors, including severity of the offense and likelihood of a favorable parole outcome.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 2468 would require the Board of Pardons and Paroles to study the effectiveness of the assessment components of the parole guidelines used by the board and parole panels in determining which inmates should be released on parole.

In conducting the study, the Board of Pardons and Paroles would obtain from the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, and any other criminal justice agency information on recidivism of inmates considered for parole between January 1, 2015, and

December 31, 2017. The board would evaluate the effectiveness of the assessments by comparing and analyzing the recidivism rates and parole guideline score of the inmates used in the study and determine for each category or score within the guidelines the number of parolees who were convicted of a misdemeanor or a felony or had their parole revoked for reasons other than a new conviction.

The board would report the study results to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and members of the Legislature by January 1, 2019, including recommendations for improving parole review and suggested changes to assessments, guidelines, or recommended parole approval rates.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 2468 would allow the Board of Pardons and Paroles to review the tools it uses to evaluate the suitability of inmates for parole, which would help avoid preventable tragedies. Unfortunately, there are serial offenders who go on to commit violent crimes, including murder, after they are released from prison early. The bill would involve a careful review of the guidelines currently in place to allow policymakers to identify any shortcomings in the existing approach.

The bill is deliberately narrow in scope to help ensure that the board could absorb the reporting requirements within its existing resources. According to the Legislative Budget Board's fiscal note, the bill would have no significant costs to the state.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

CSHB 2468 would take too narrow a look at a complicated issue that requires in-depth analysis. Any attempt to adequately review parole guidelines and recidivism would incur expenses beyond those that could be absorbed within the Board of Pardons and Paroles' existing resources.