

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 678 Session of  
2007

INTRODUCED BY JAMES, CALTAGIRONE, MYERS, THOMAS, YOUNGBLOOD,  
CREIGHTON, PRESTON, JOSEPHS, HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, COHEN,  
FABRIZIO, W. KELLER, KIRKLAND, WILLIAMS AND BASTIAN,  
MARCH 9, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, MARCH 9, 2007

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of August 6, 1941 (P.L.861, No.323), entitled,  
2 as amended, "An act to create a uniform and exclusive system  
3 for the administration of parole in this Commonwealth;  
4 providing state probation services; establishing the  
5 'Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole'; conferring and  
6 defining its jurisdiction, duties, powers and functions;  
7 including the supervision of persons placed upon probation  
8 and parole in certain designated cases; providing for the  
9 method of appointment of its members; regulating the  
10 appointment, removal and discharge of its officers, clerks  
11 and employes; dividing the Commonwealth into administrative  
12 districts for purposes of probation and parole; fixing the  
13 salaries of members of the board and of certain other  
14 officers and employes thereof; making violations of certain  
15 provisions of this act misdemeanors; providing penalties  
16 therefor; and for other cognate purposes, and making an  
17 appropriation," further providing for a system of earned  
18 time.

19 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
20 hereby enacts as follows:

21 Section 1. Section 21 of the act of August 6, 1941 (P.L.861,  
22 No.323), referred to as the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and  
23 Parole Law, amended December 21, 1998 (P.L.1077, No.143), is  
24 amended to read:

25 Section 21. (a) The board is hereby authorized to release

1 on parole any convict confined in any penal institution of this  
2 Commonwealth as to whom power to parole is herein granted to the  
3 board, except convicts condemned to death or serving life  
4 imprisonment, whenever in its opinion the best interests of the  
5 convict justify or require his being paroled and it does not  
6 appear that the interests of the Commonwealth will be injured  
7 thereby. Parole shall be subject in every instance to the  
8 Commonwealth's right to immediately retake and hold in custody  
9 without further proceedings any parolee charged after his parole  
10 with an additional offense until a determination can be made  
11 whether to continue his parole status. [The] Except as provided  
12 in subsection (a.1), the power to parole herein granted to the  
13 Board of Parole may not be exercised in the board's discretion  
14 at any time before, but only after, the expiration of the  
15 minimum term of imprisonment fixed by the court in its sentence  
16 or by the Pardon Board in a sentence which has been reduced by  
17 commutation.

18 (a.1) The board may exercise its power to parole a person  
19 before the expiration of the minimum term of imprisonment fixed  
20 by the court in its sentence or the Pardon Board in a sentence  
21 which has been reduced by commutation by reducing the sentence  
22 by applying earned time awarded under section 34.2.

23 (b) The board may not release a person on parole unless the  
24 person achieves a negative result within forty-five days prior  
25 to the date of release in a screening test approved by the  
26 Department of Health for the detection of the presence of  
27 controlled substances or designer drugs under the act of April  
28 14, 1972 (P.L.233, No.64), known as "The Controlled Substance,  
29 Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act." The cost of these pre-parole  
30 drug screening tests for inmates subject to the parole release

1 jurisdiction of the board, whether confined in a State or local  
2 correctional facility, shall be paid by the board. The board  
3 shall establish rules and regulations for the payment of these  
4 costs and may limit the types and cost of these screening tests  
5 that would be subject to payment by the board. The board shall  
6 establish, as a condition of continued parole for a parolee who,  
7 as an inmate, tested positive for the presence of a controlled  
8 substance or a designer drug or who was paroled from a sentence  
9 arising from a conviction under "The Controlled Substance, Drug,  
10 Device and Cosmetic Act," or from a drug-related crime, the  
11 parolee's achievement of negative results in such screening  
12 tests randomly applied. The random screening tests shall be  
13 performed at the discretion of the board, and the parolee  
14 undergoing the tests shall be responsible for the costs of the  
15 tests. The funds collected for the tests shall be applied  
16 against the contract for such testing between the board and a  
17 testing laboratory approved by the Department of Health.

18 (b.1) The board may not release a person who is serving a  
19 sentence for a crime of violence as defined in 42 Pa.C.S. §  
20 9714(g) (relating to sentences for second and subsequent  
21 offenses) on parole unless the person has received instruction  
22 from the Department of Corrections on the impact of crime on  
23 victims and the community.

24 (c) The board shall have the power during the period for  
25 which a person shall have been sentenced to recommit one paroled  
26 for violation of the terms and conditions of his parole and from  
27 time to time to reparole and recommit in the same manner and  
28 with the same procedure as in the case of an original parole or  
29 recommitment, if, in the judgment of the board, there is a  
30 reasonable probability that the convict will be benefited by

1 again according him liberty and it does not appear that the  
2 interests of the Commonwealth will be injured thereby.

3 (d) When the board releases a parolee from a State or local  
4 correctional facility, the board shall provide written notice to  
5 the probation department located in the county where the  
6 sentencing order was imposed of the release and new address of  
7 the parolee.

8 Section 2. The act is amended by adding a section to read:

9 Section 34.2. (a) On or after the effective date of this  
10 section and except as provided in subsection (b), earned time  
11 shall be applied to an inmate as follows:

12 (1) Earned time shall be awarded to inmates at the rate of  
13 three months per year served who have made an active effort to  
14 participate in approved institutional programs, including  
15 attempting to participate in a program offered by the prison or  
16 jail. Earned time shall be awarded, on a prorated basis, for  
17 each complete calendar month spent without being charged with an  
18 infraction of the guidelines or regulations issued under  
19 paragraph (2). No earned time shall be awarded for time served  
20 prior to the effective date of this section.

21 (2) The Secretary of Corrections shall issue guidelines or  
22 regulations prescribing the participation for which and the  
23 procedures by which earned time may be awarded, withheld or  
24 revoked.

25 (3) An inmate charged with an infraction of the guidelines  
26 or regulations issued under paragraph (2) shall receive written  
27 notice and an explanation of the charge and an opportunity for a  
28 hearing.

29 (4) Earned time that has been granted may be revoked for  
30 subsequent infractions in accordance with the guidelines or

1 regulations issued under paragraph (2).

2 (b) An inmate who has been returned to prison by the  
3 Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole for violations of  
4 parole shall not be eligible for earned time during service of  
5 the balance of the inmate's original term of imprisonment, but  
6 shall be eligible for earned time during service of any new  
7 sentence imposed as a result of the violations of parole.

8 (c) For purposes of this section, the term "inmate" shall  
9 mean an individual serving a sentence of imprisonment with a  
10 maximum term of two years or more. The term shall not include an  
11 individual who meets any of the following:

12 (1) Is subject to a sentence the calculation of which  
13 includes an enhancement for the use of a deadly weapon as  
14 defined pursuant to law or the sentencing guidelines promulgated  
15 by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing.

16 (2) Has been convicted of a personal injury crime as defined  
17 in section 103 of the act of November 24, 1998 (P.L.882,  
18 No.111), known as the "Crime Victims Act," or an attempt or  
19 conspiracy to commit such a crime.

20 (3) Has been convicted of violating 18 Pa.C.S. § 4302  
21 (relating to incest), 5901 (relating to open lewdness), 6312  
22 (relating to sexual abuse of children), 6318 (relating to  
23 unlawful contact with minor) or 6320 (relating to sexual  
24 exploitation of children) or Ch. 76 Subch. C (relating to  
25 Internet child pornography).

26 Section 3. This act shall take effect in 60 days.