

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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**HOUSE BILL**  
**No. 1750** Session of  
1979

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INTRODUCED BY GOEBEL, ALDEN, NOYE, MICHLOVIC, PERZEL, PRATT,  
POTT AND LETTERMAN, SEPTEMBER 25, 1979

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1979

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AN ACT

1 Providing for the establishment of inmate work camps by the  
2 Bureau of Correction.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known as the "Inmate Work Camp Act."

7 Section 2. Legislative purpose.

8 The General Assembly declares the purpose of this act to be  
9 to foster the rehabilitation of prisoners confined to State  
10 institutions, by providing opportunities to learn and master  
11 skills, to promote prisoner well-being and feeling of self-worth  
12 by allowing prisoners to earn significant compensation for their  
13 labor, and, in addition, to provide a source of labor for the  
14 Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental  
15 Resources, in areas where manpower is not available or where  
16 skilled labor could be put to a higher and more efficient use.

17 Section 3. Definitions.

1       The following words and phrases as used in this act shall  
2       have the meanings given them in this section unless the context  
3       clearly indicates otherwise:

4       "Bureau."   The Bureau of Correction in the Department of  
5       Justice.

6       "Inmates."   Those persons confined under sentence to the work  
7       camps provided for by this act.

8       "Prison official or officials."   The individual or  
9       individuals of the State correctional institutions designated by  
10      the bureau to receive applications from prisoners and to approve  
11      or disapprove said applications.

12      "Prisoners."   Those persons confined under sentence to the  
13      State correctional institutions enumerated in section 911 of the  
14      act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.177, No.175), known as "The  
15      Administrative Code of 1929."

16      Section 4.   Minimum security work camps.

17      (a)   The Department of Justice, through the Bureau of  
18      Correction, shall establish and maintain not less than two  
19      minimum security work camps, at least one in the eastern  
20      district and one in the western district of the Commonwealth.  
21      Each work camp shall house not less than 60 inmates and shall  
22      consist of housing for the inmates, a mess hall, a recreation  
23      area and other necessary buildings.

24      (b)   The work camps shall be constructed on land owned by the  
25      Commonwealth or its agencies. The bureau shall select a site for  
26      each work camp from the land available, and shall enter into an  
27      agreement with the agency holding title to the selected site to  
28      secure transfer of the land to the bureau. Should a dispute  
29      develop between the bureau and the other agency in the site  
30      selection or transfer of the land, the Governor shall have

1 authority to resolve the dispute in the best interest of the  
2 Commonwealth.

3 (c) No work camp shall be located on the premises of a State  
4 correctional institution.

5 (d) The work camps herein provided for shall be established  
6 and put into operation no later than two years following the  
7 effective date of this act.

8 Section 5. Inmates.

9 (a) Inmates for the work camps shall be selected in  
10 accordance with this section. Prisoners confined to the various  
11 State correctional institutions who wish to participate in the  
12 work camp program shall submit applications to the prison  
13 official or officials of their institution designated by the  
14 bureau to receive such applications. The form and content of the  
15 application shall be established by the bureau.

16 (b) The bureau shall promulgate rules and regulations for  
17 the consideration of applications by both the bureau and the  
18 designated prison official or officials. These rules and  
19 regulations shall include, but not be limited to, consideration  
20 of such factors as:

21 (1) The behavior record of the prisoner while confined  
22 to the institution.

23 (2) The criminal record of the prisoner.

24 (3) The length of sentence the prisoner is currently  
25 serving.

26 (4) Recommendations by prison officials or by civic,  
27 educational, religious or business leaders.

28 (5) Any other relevant reports or observations.

29 No one factor may serve as the sole reason for approval or  
30 disapproval of an application.

(c) The prison official or officials shall forward all approved applications to the bureau for further review and action. If approved by the bureau, the prisoner shall be transferred to the work camp designated by the bureau. If the full complement of prisoners is present in the camp at the time the prisoner's application receives bureau approval, the prisoner's name shall be placed on a waiting list, in chronological order as approved, and the prisoner shall be transferred to the camp as openings permit.

(d) (1) If an application is disapproved by the bureau, the bureau shall so notify the prisoner in writing, explaining the reason for disapproval. Disapproval by the bureau shall not preclude the prisoner from reapplying for the program at a later date.

(2) If an application submitted by a prisoner is disapproved by the prison official or officials, he or they shall so notify the prisoner in writing, explaining the reason for disapproval. The prisoner may then submit an application directly to the bureau and the bureau may, in its discretion, review and act upon the application. The prisoner must be notified within 30 days after submission as to the disposition of his application by the bureau.

(3) Disapproval by the prison official or officials shall not preclude the prisoner from reapplying for the program at a later date.

#### Section 6. Escape.

If, while lodged in a work camp, an inmate attempts to escape, or escapes and is recaptured, he shall be immediately retransferred to the institution from which he came and shall be precluded from further participation in the work camp program.

Section 7. Work projects and supervision.

(a) An appropriate number of inmates in the work camp shall be employed at administrative, maintenance, cooking and supply purposes within the camp itself.

(b) The remaining inmates shall be employed:

(1) To perform maintenance work on or about highways, including, but not limited to, repair and painting of guard rails, collection of trash, pothole repair, mowing of weeds and pruning of tree limbs.

(2) To plant seedling trees along highways and on dividing medians between traffic lanes and in State parks and forests.

(3) To assist in maintaining the appearance of State parks and recreation areas.

(4) To perform other maintenance tasks for the Commonwealth as needed.

(c) Each inmate shall labor at his respective task, unless excused for sickness or other good cause, not in excess of eight hours each day, and shall not be required to labor on Sundays or public holidays. For his labor, each inmate shall receive compensation in the form of wages, as provided in section 8.

(d) To further the purposes of this section, the bureau shall enter into contracts and agreements with the Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Resources. These agreements shall include the following matters:

(1) The type of work to be performed.

(2) The responsibility for furnishing tools, materials and supplies for performing a particular work project.

(3) Transportation of inmates to and from the work site.

(4) All other relevant factors pertaining to the work

1 projects.

2 (e) The Department of Transportation and the Department of  
3 Environmental Resources shall provide the necessary supervisory  
4 personnel to direct the work project and the bureau shall  
5 furnish security.

6 Section 8. Compensation of inmates.

7 (a) (1) All inmates, whether working inside or outside the  
8 work camp, shall receive an hourly wage of no less than \$1.50  
9 per hour. The rate of compensation may vary for individual  
10 inmates, depending upon the work performed, the productivity  
11 of the inmate, the length of time the inmate has been lodged  
12 in the camp and whether the inmate is occupying a supervisory  
13 or nonsupervisory position.

14 (2) An account shall be kept by the designated person at  
15 each camp of the labor performed by the inmates, the number  
16 of hours each inmate is actually engaged in work and the rate  
17 of wage at which he is to be paid.

18 (b) (1) One-half of the amount of wages payable to an  
19 inmate of a work camp, or the entire amount if the inmate so  
20 wishes, shall constitute a fund for the relief of any person  
21 or persons dependent upon such inmate, and shall be paid on a  
22 monthly basis to the person or persons establishing such  
23 dependency to the satisfaction of the bureau. If the inmate  
24 has no dependents, one-half of his wages shall be deposited  
25 to the inmate's credit and shall be paid to him upon his  
26 discharge from the work camp.

27 (2) The remaining wages shall be paid to the inmate on a  
28 biweekly basis or, if the inmate prefers, the wages may be  
29 credited to his account and paid to him as needed or as he  
30 requests.

1 Section 9. Program review.

2 The bureau shall contact each person who was assigned to a  
3 work camp during his period of confinement six months after his  
4 sentence is completed, to ascertain the impact of his  
5 participation in the work camp program. The bureau shall  
6 determine the manner in which contact is to be made, and  
7 response by the person is to be voluntary and in no way required  
8 or mandated.

9 Section 10. Rules and regulations.

10 The bureau shall have authority to promulgate necessary rules  
11 and regulations in order to implement the provisions of this  
12 act.

13 Section 11. Effective date.

14 This act shall take effect immediately.