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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 651 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY D. MILLER, BULLOCK, KINSEY, N. NELSON,  
SCHLOSSBERG, SANCHEZ, A. DAVIS, HILL-EVANS, MADDEN, CIRESI,  
FREEMAN, KINKEAD, INNAMORATO AND ROZZI, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

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AN ACT

1 Amending Title 61 (Prisons and Parole) of the Pennsylvania  
2 Consolidated Statutes, in safe community reentry, further  
3 providing for definitions and for Safe Community Reentry  
4 Program.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Section 4902 of Title 61 of the Pennsylvania  
8 Consolidated Statutes is amended by adding a definition to read:

9 § 4902. Definitions.

10 The following words and phrases when used in this chapter  
11 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
12 context clearly indicates otherwise:

13 \* \* \*

14 "Reentry certificate." A certificate that serves as proof of  
15 participation in the program and completion of all approved  
16 programs while incarcerated.

17 Section 2. Section 4903 of Title 61 is amended by adding a  
18 subsection to read:

1 § 4903. Safe Community Reentry Program.

2 \* \* \*

3 (f) Reentry certificate.--

4 (1) Prior to an offender's release, the department shall  
5 issue the offender a reentry certificate, which indicates, at  
6 a minimum, the following:

7 (i) The needs-assessed treatment programs completed  
8 by the offender.

9 (ii) The educational programs completed by the  
10 offender. The following apply:

11 (A) The activities under this subparagraph shall  
12 reflect any academic program that the offender  
13 completed or in which the offender enrolled during  
14 the current incarceration of the offender.

15 (B) Unless completed as part of an  
16 institutional-based program, all general education  
17 development, high school and higher education program  
18 information shall be self-reported by the offender.

19 (C) If the offender self-reported completion of  
20 general education development, high school or higher  
21 education requirements, the reentry certificate of  
22 the offender shall so indicate.

23 (D) The reentry certificate shall indicate any  
24 academic program in which the offender is enrolled  
25 during the current incarceration of the offender and  
26 the current status as of the date of the reentry  
27 certificate.

28 (iii) The vocational and work history of the  
29 offender, including job skills, work details, on-the-job  
30 training and vocational education participation.

1           (iv) The personal development of the offender and  
2 other special programs in which the offender  
3 participated, including:

4           (A) Voluntary programming completed by the  
5 offender that is beyond the programs required or  
6 identified through an assessment.

7           (B) Programs that the offender believes will  
8 enhance the overall development of the offender and  
9 the successful reentry of the offender into the  
10 community.

11       (2) The department shall provide for the creation and  
12 printing of a reentry certificate for an offender at the  
13 facility where the offender is located. The following apply:

14           (i) If, for any reason, the offender is deemed  
15 ineligible for release after the printing of the reentry  
16 certificate, the department shall destroy the reentry  
17 certificate.

18           (ii) If a discrepancy in the information provided on  
19 the reentry certificate is discovered, the offender may  
20 request a corrective reprint of the reentry certificate  
21 subject to verification by the department.

22           (iii) After release from incarceration, the offender  
23 may request copies of the reentry certificate from the  
24 department. Copies shall be printed and notarized by the  
25 facility where the offender was incarcerated.

26       (3) A reentry certificate presented to an employer shall  
27 create a presumption of due care as to the hiring of an  
28 individual to whom the reentry certificate was issued in  
29 relation to the individual's stated programmatic progress,  
30 educational advancement, work force skills and completion of

1 the program. Nothing in this section shall relieve the  
2 employer from ensuring the completion of any required  
3 background clearance, meeting any other related industry  
4 standard or providing appropriate supervision for the  
5 position.

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