

HOUSE BILL NO. 718

INTRODUCED BY K. SEEKINS-CROWE, L. BENNETT, S. FITZPATRICK, B. LER, K. ZOLNIKOV, L. BREWSTER

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF REENTRY SERVICES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY; ESTABLISHING A PURPOSE AND DUTIES OF THE OFFICE; PROVIDING THAT THE OFFICE OF REENTRY SERVICES SHALL COLLABORATE WITH STATE AGENCIES, COMPANIES, AND STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS; ~~AND~~ ESTABLISHING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**NEW SECTION. Section 1. Office of reentry services -- purpose -- duties --collaboration -- stakeholder engagement -- report.** (1) There is an office of reentry services in the department of labor and industry.

(2) The purpose of the office is to create a collaborative effort among state agencies to coordinate supportive services for individuals who are exiting or preparing to exit incarceration and reenter communities in Montana, including but not limited to expansion of existing programs and new programs related to:

- (a) job training for incarcerated individuals, including skilled-trade and apprenticeship programs;
- (b) job placement for individuals after exiting incarceration;
- (c) workforce and supportive services, including career education;
- (d) the availability of and access to online certificate training programs;
- (e) the availability of and access to general or secondary education programs;
- (f) initiatives to teach entrepreneurship;
- (g) transition planning and housing assistance;
- (h) initiatives to ensure individuals exiting incarceration have adequate transportation and food security; and

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Drafter: Matthew Weaver,

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(i) coordination of care to address behavioral health needs of individuals, including initiatives that improve access to substance abuse and mental health treatment facilities for individuals exiting incarceration.

(3) The office shall coordinate existing reentry programs and services, including grant programs, in collaboration with companies, stakeholder organizations, and agencies, including but not limited to the following:

(a) department of commerce;

(b) department of corrections;

(c) department of justice;

(d) department of public health and human services;

(e) office of commissioner of higher education; and

(f) office of public instruction.

(4) The office shall consult with the Montana state workforce innovation board established in 53-2-1203 to engage in stakeholder outreach in the development of services prescribed in subsection (2). Stakeholders shall include but are not limited to members of the business, mental health, substance use treatment, criminal justice advocacy, and affordable and transitional housing sectors.

(5) By July 1 prior to each legislative session, the department shall submit a report to the legislative finance committee and the law and justice interim committee in accordance with 5-11-210. The report must include a description of the services provided by the office of reentry services over the biennium, the cost of services rendered, and the number of individuals served.

**NEW SECTION. Section 2. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as a new part in Title 39, chapter 11, and the provisions of Title 39, chapter 11, apply to [section 1].

**NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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