

SB 1391 Inmate Education / Community Colleges

(as amended April 10, 2014)

Senator Loni Hancock

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

To provide educational opportunities and career technical education programs to inmates in an effort to increase job skills and employability upon release from prison. Community College expertise and faculty connections to workforce networks of employers with a track record of hiring formerly incarcerated men and women are key components to the inmate education proposals in SB 1391. Investing in programs leading to employment for formerly incarcerated men and women (in jobs with wages to sustain living expenses) is essential to the long term goals of improving the lives of the formerly incarcerated, lowering recidivism rates and saving money.

SB 1391 will allow community colleges to collect funds for inmate programs within prisons. In addition the bill provides a grant program for community college Innovative Career Education programs with sequences of courses leading to industry and state certification. The bill provides the direction and means for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in collaboration with the Chancellor of the Community Colleges to develop metrics for the evaluation of career education programs and for the potential replication of programs most successful in enabling formerly incarcerated men and women to secure high skills jobs upon release.

PROBLEM & NEED FOR THE BILL

Inmate Education, both academic and career technical education are key to giving inmates the skills and social support in finding employment upon release from prison. While some higher education and community organizations provide career skills development opportunities to inmates, few collaborations to date have resulted in the hands-on sequences of courses leading to industry or state certifications known to be key in seeking subsequent employment. Current law specifically prohibits community colleges from collecting funds generated by attendance hours for programs that are not "open to the public". Because inmate education is not "open", community colleges have been hamstrung on the types of education offered inmates. Correspondence courses and television/video courses cannot substitute for in-person, hands on, experiential courses.

BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH

Community colleges have a great deal of experience with career technical education; faculty is experienced in the field and classroom. CTE faculty have established campus programs and an understanding of the work world, the economic needs of their communities and a wide network of workforce development/economic development contacts. In many cases, community colleges are closely aligned with WIA funded employment centers, and, may also be linked with the 13 new pre-release centers developed as part of the realignment effort with early release to ease prison overcrowding (which continues to be approx. 144% of the designed maximum capacity of prisons in California.) (January 2014)

RESEARCH

The recent RAND report findings of \$1 dollar invested in inmate education results in \$5 saved in future prison costs, is part of the impetus behind the provisions in SB 1391. The reliance on Community Colleges in SB 1391 is strengthened by the findings in the report as well.

2013 RAND Report: *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education*:

"A common thread among three of the five statistically significant instructional delivery methods—**programs with courses taught by college instructors, programs with courses taught by instructors external to the correctional facility, and programs that have a post-release component—is that they connect inmates both directly and indirectly with the outside community.**

College instructors and instructors external to the facility can potentially infuse the program with approaches, exercises, and standards being used in more traditional instructional settings. Additionally, these instructors provide inmates with direct, on-going contact with those in the outside community. Programs with a post-release component provide continuity in support that can assist inmates as they continue on in education and/or enter the workforce in the months immediately after they are released.

Although we are limited in our ability to classify programs and to establish causality, the findings here provide suggestive evidence that correctional education may be most effective in preventing recidivism when the program connects inmates with the community outside the correctional facility". page 36;

SUPPORT

Yuba Community College District
Los Rios Community College District
Yosemite Community College District
Kern County Community College District
Los Angeles Community College District
Peralta Community College District
Rio Hondo Community College Districts
South Orange County Community College District
West Kern Community College District

OPPOSITION

None Known

BILL STATUS

Senate Education Committee: April 24th hearing
Senate Public Safety hearing tentative date: April
29th

KEY CONTACTS

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