

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to corrections; providing a short title; amending s. 947.16, F.S.; providing that certain inmates are eligible for parole after completing a specified portion of their sentences; requiring an initial parole hearing within a specified period; amending s. 944.801, F.S.; requiring the Correctional Educational Program to make a masonry apprenticeship program available to certain inmates; requiring the program to make seminary programs available to inmates in every facility; providing that state funds may not be spent for certain purposes; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Prison Reform Act of 2015."

Section 2. Paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of section 947.16, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as paragraph (f), and a new paragraph (e) is added to that subsection to read:

947.16 Eligibility for parole; initial parole interviews; powers and duties of commission.—

(1) Every person who has been convicted of a felony or who has been convicted of one or more misdemeanors and whose sentence or cumulative sentences total 12 months or more, who is

27 confined in execution of the judgment of the court, and whose
 28 record during confinement or while under supervision is good,
 29 shall, unless otherwise provided by law, be eligible for
 30 interview for parole consideration of her or his cumulative
 31 sentence structure as follows:

32 (e) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a person
 33 who has been convicted of a felony, other than a violent felony
 34 offense listed in s. 775.084(1)(b)1., whose record during
 35 confinement or while under supervision is good, shall, upon
 36 completion of 25 percent of his or her sentence, be eligible for
 37 parole as provided in this chapter and shall have an initial
 38 interview conducted by a hearing examiner within 3 months after
 39 the date that he or she completes 25 percent of the sentence.

40 Section 3. Paragraphs (m) and (n) are added to subsection
 41 (3) of section 944.801, Florida Statutes, to read:

42 944.801 Education for state prisoners.—

43 (3) The responsibilities of the Correctional Education
 44 Program shall be to:

45 (m) Institute a masonry apprenticeship program that
 46 provides a certification upon completion. The program shall be
 47 available to inmates who are within 2.5 years of their release
 48 date.

49 (n) Make available seminary programs to inmates in each
 50 facility. The department shall ensure that state funds are not
 51 expended for the purpose of furthering religious indoctrination,
 52 but rather that state funds are expended for purposes of

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53 furthering secular goals, such as criminal rehabilitation, the
54 successful reintegration of offenders into the community, and
55 the reduction of recidivism.

56 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.