

Assembly Bill 622

The Rehabilitation Recognition Act

Assembly Member Ash Kalra

SUMMARY

Assembly Bill (AB) 622 clarifies that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) is permitted to award credits to people with an indeterminate sentence for good conduct and completion of educational and other programs. This bill would ensure that individuals who have demonstrated extensive rehabilitation and were deemed suitable for parole are not unnecessarily incarcerated past their parole date.

BACKGROUND

Under existing law, people incarcerated with a life sentence can earn credits for good conduct and completing educational and other programs. Per CDCR's regulations, people with an indeterminate sentence, which requires appearing before the parole board to determine if release is appropriate, can advance their "minimum eligible parole date" (MEPD) with these credits.

From 2017 until the middle of 2024, credits were used to determine when someone with a life sentence was *eligible* for release, and only eligibility. No one with an indeterminate sentence was released until the Board of Parole Hearings determined they did not pose an "unreasonable risk of danger to society if released from prison." This is an exceptionally rigorous, evidence-based process that prioritizes public safety. In 2024, the Board of Parole Hearings [approved only 14% of people](#).

[CDCR's 2024 report](#) highlights that participants in CBO-run programs earning Rehabilitative Achievement Credits return to prison at nearly half the statewide recidivism rate. The Committee on Revision of the Penal Code also cited in their [2024 annual report](#) that between Fiscal Years 2011–12 and 2018–19, the parole board approved 5,248 people for release. Of those individuals, less than 3% had a new conviction of any kind within 3 years of release, and less than half of a percent had a new felony conviction for an offense against a person.

Despite the success of these credit-earning programs, recent litigation has resulted in CDCR being unable to release people with indeterminate sentences who had earned earlier parole eligibility dates with these credits and were approved for release by the parole board. This is contrary to current legal processes and has created unnecessary, costly delays in parole.

SOLUTION

AB 622 simply reaffirms CDCR's authority to issue credits that would allow someone to advance their MEPD and be eligible to go before the Board of Parole Hearings. This bill will enable the individuals who have completed the most significant rehabilitative programming and were found by the parole board to be appropriate to be released to re-enter under parole supervision and re-entry programming.

By clarifying that CDCR is permitted to issue these credits, AB 622 ensures fairness in the parole process, reduces wasteful spending, and asserts the Legislature's commitment to rehabilitation.

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