ISSUE

There is a strong link between incarceration and homelessness. People on parole who are homeless are seven times more likely to reoffend than those housed. This leads to a cycle of incarceration and homelessness. Stable housing reduces recidivism, strengthens our communities, and promotes equity.

BACKGROUND

Supportive housing is the combination of affordable housing that does not limit length of stay, and services that promote housing stability. It is an evidence-based intervention proven to reduce recidivism.

Formerly incarcerated individuals are almost 10 times more likely to experience homelessness. An Ohio program demonstrates formerly homeless parolees living in supportive housing have a 60% lower recidivism rate than those who are homeless. New York supportive housing programs show lower recidivism rates, lower Medicaid costs, and lower arrest rates among supportive housing tenants than those still homeless. Lastly, California data indicates supportive housing tenants are able to decrease their days incarcerated by over 60%.

The Legislature established the Integrated Services for Mentally Ill Parolees (ISMIP) in California’s 2007-08 budget to address this pressing crisis. The program receives annual funding intended to provide supportive housing and intensive case management for homeless parolees with mental health needs.

The current program is not in line with the Legislature’s intent. CDCR uses ISMIP funds to pay one-hundred percent of the cost of mental health treatment to a small number of parolees, instead of enrolling them into Medi-Cal where they can draw down a federal match of 50-90%. Additionally, only a small number of ISMIP participants are homeless, and the housing provided is temporary.

A UCLA study found ISMIP fails to significantly reduce recidivism, and that participants receive only 10 months of mental health treatment on average, before dropping out of the program.

THIS BILL

SB 282 redirects ISMIP funding toward the Supportive Housing Program for Persons on Parole and do the following:

• Require CDCR to refer parolees to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD);
• Administer funds through HCD using evidence-based, culturally competent evidence-based models;
• Offer grants to counties working to break the cycle of incarceration and homelessness; and
• Require county grantees ensure participants can access mental health and substance use disorder treatment through Medi-Cal.

SB 282 seeks to reduce recidivism rates by addressing the pressing need of supportive housing and wrap-around services for individuals on parole with mental health needs.

SUPPORT

Corporation for Supportive Housing (Co-sponsor)
Housing California (Co-sponsor)
Policy Link (Co-sponsor)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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