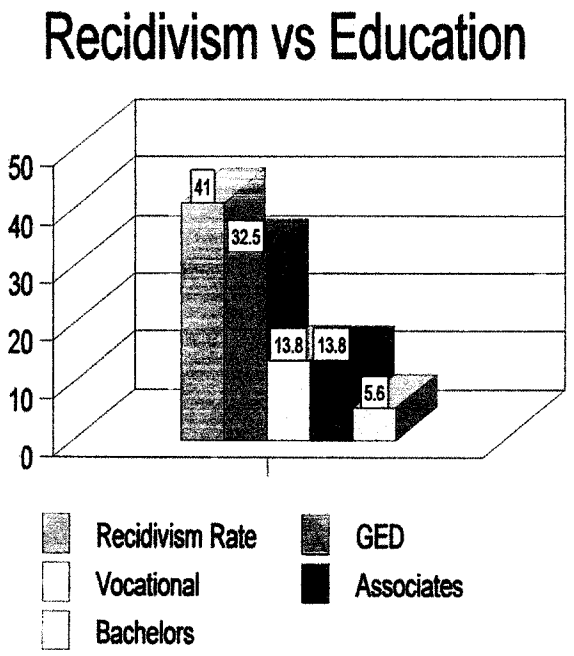
SENATE JUDICIARY
Exhibit No. 4
Date 3-22-02
Bill No. HB 452

HB 452 Achievement Credit for Parolees- Fact Sheet

Ex-Offenders who earn a GED, Vocational Certification, or College Degree has significantly lower recidivism / re-offence rates and save society in tax dollars spent on supervision, incarceration and public assistance.



- 1991 Texas Department of Criminal Justice 12 year study showed:
  - 13.7 percent for parolees holding associate degrees,
  - 5.6 percent for holders of bachelors' degrees
  - 0 percent for those with masters' degrees.
- 2003 Three State Study (Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio 2003.)
  - Study confirms findings of Texas study.
- 2005 National Institute of Corrections Study
  - 50 State Survey of data and education policy.
  - Reconfirmed findings of Texas and Three State study.

Cost of Recidivism

- $25,185.00 per year cost of incarceration (source DOC fact sheet - DOC website)
- Family public assistance - Offenders family

HB 452 allows for a successful re-entry into society after a period of supervision and personal achievement. The Bill also reduces recidivism and the costs associated with it. The bill accomplishes this in three ways.

(1) Allow those who have learned from their mistakes to re-enter society by hard work and achievement.

(2) Reduces recidivism thus protecting the public and allowing resources to be directed more efficiently.

(3) Promotes self improvement / work skill development through positive personal action.

The credits are based on personal achievements and behavior of the parolee. The parolee is responsible for keeping the appropriate records and applying for the sentence credit. In the studies above and others it has been shown, that those individuals who after their conviction have earned their GED, College Degree or completed a vocational program have recidivism rates that are significantly lower that those who do not.

Conclusion

The prison and parole population is growing, recidivism is a problem that effects the offender, their families and society in many ways. Studies done in the last 20 yeas have consitantly shown that education is key in reducing the recidivism rate. Passage of HB 425 will be a step in the right direction in reducing costs to the taxpayer and in promoting sound correctional policy.

Data Sources

Montana Department of Corrections - Website and online fact sheet

Beck, Allen and Shipley, Bernard 1989 "Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1983" Washington D.C. : Bureau of Justice Statistics

Harer, M. (1994). Recidivism among federal prison releasees in 1987: A preliminary report. Washington DC: Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Montana.government website: retrieved March 30, 2006 from http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/article.asp)

Petersilia , Joan 2000 "Parole and Prisoner Reentry in the United States" Summer 2000 Perspectives American Probation and Parole Association

Erisman, W 2006 "Learning to Reduce Recidivism: A 50-State Analysis of Postsecondary Correctional Education Policy" National Institute of Corrections -Online library

Education Reduces Crime, Three-State Recidivism Study 2003. You may download the complete study at http://www.ceanational.org/documents/3StateFinal.pdf.