

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 622

2 INTRODUCED BY K. SEEKINS-CROWE

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A RETURNING CITIZENS EDUCATION PILOT
5 PROGRAM; PROVIDING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS WILL CONTRACT WITH THE
6 UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OR A UNIT OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM AND
7 PROVIDE INSTRUCTION; REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT TO REPORT ON THE PROGRAM RESULTS;
8 PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE."

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10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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12 NEW SECTION. Section 1. Returning citizens education pilot program. (1) There is a returning
13 citizens education pilot program administered by the department of corrections. The purpose of the program is
14 to provide marketable career skills to individuals who are incarcerated, in prerelease programs, or on probation
15 or parole supervision.

16 (2) The program must provide two tracks of education, including:

17 (a) a track designed to provide training and testing targeted at an individual who has not earned a
18 high school diploma or who needs to develop college preparation skills; and19 (b) a track that offers courses that allow an individual to fulfill requirements for certificate programs or
20 associate degrees in fields that meet Montana employers' workforce needs.

21 (3) (a) The department shall contract with the Montana university system or an individual unit of the
22 university system to administer the program and provide instruction. The contracting partner shall provide
23 program management and instruction related to both education tracks listed in subsection (2). The contracting
24 partner shall provide instruction in at least one secure correctional facility jointly selected by the department and
25 the contracting partner and in the community for individuals in a prerelease facility or on probation or parole
26 supervision.

27 (b) The department may limit the pilot program to one community or geographic area depending on
28 the limitations of funding and staff and shall develop behavior standards or other eligibility criteria for an

1 individual seeking to participate in the pilot program.

2 (4) The department shall report to the governor and the legislature as provided in 5-11-210. The
3 report must include:

4 (a) the number of individuals enrolled in each track;

5 (b) the number of individuals completing each track;

6 (c) reasons why an individual might have failed to complete each track;

7 (d) detailed information related to how the funds appropriated for the program have been spent;

8 (e) a plan for how the department and educational institutions can seek federal approval for
9 institutions and programs so that incarcerated individuals can be eligible for federal educational grant programs;

10 and

11 (f) recommendations for the future of the pilot program, including if the program should continue and
12 options to expand the program to other facilities and communities.

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14 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$400,000 to the department of
15 corrections for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021, only for the purposes of the returning citizens education
16 pilot program provided for in [section 1].

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18 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2021.

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20 NEW SECTION. Section 4. Termination. [This act] terminates June 30, 2023.

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