

HCS HB 189 -- PERSONS FOUND GUILTY OF CERTAIN OFFENSES

SPONSOR: Toalson Reisch

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Special Committee on Criminal Justice by a vote of 9 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules - Administrative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 0. Was Recommitted from the floor to the Standing Committee on Rules - Administrative Oversight. Voted "Do Pass with HCS #2" by the Standing Committee on Rules - Administrative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 0.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF OFFENDERS

This bill specifies that MO HealthNet benefits shall be suspended, rather than canceled or terminated, for an offender entering a correctional facility or jail if the Department of Social Services is notified of the person's entry into the correctional center or jail, the person was currently enrolled in MO HealthNet, and the person is otherwise eligible for MO HealthNet benefits but for his or her incarcerated status. Upon release from incarceration, the suspension shall end and the person shall continue to be eligible for MO HealthNet benefits until such time as he or she is otherwise ineligible.

The Department of Corrections shall notify the Department of Social Services within 20 days of receiving information that person receiving MO HealthNet benefits is or will become an offender in a correctional center or jail and within 45 days prior to the release of such person whose benefits have been suspended under this bill. City, county, and private jails shall notify the Department of Social Services within 10 days of receiving information that person receiving MO HealthNet benefits is or will become an offender in the jail (Sections 217.930 and 221.125, RSMo).

SALE OF LIQUOR AND LOTTERY TICKETS

The bill also provides that the supervisor of liquor control shall not prohibit a person from participating in the sale of alcohol within the scope of his or her employment solely on the basis of being found guilty of a felony offense. The bill also repeals language requiring an employer that has a liquor license to report to the Division of Liquor Control within the Department of Public Safety the identity of any employee that has been convicted of a felony. Finally, the Missouri Gaming Commission shall not prohibit a person from participating in the sale of lottery tickets solely on the basis of being found guilty of a criminal offense, but the person will not be eligible to be a licensed lottery game retailer (Sections 311.060, 311.660, and 313.220).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that Boone County has a 1.5% unemployment rate and there are not workers to fill open jobs. When individuals convicted of felonies are released from prison, we want them to be employed, to help reduce the recidivism rate. At least 20% of people released from prison re-offend. We are trying to reduce that amount by giving them options for gainful employment. Currently, felons are not allowed to work at an establishment that sells liquor or lottery tickets and we need to change that, especially since we are not trying to allow them to hold a license to sell liquor or lottery tickets.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Toalson Reisch; Missouri Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores; and Missouri Catholic Conference.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that, for clarification, the department does not have oversight over the lottery.

Testifying on the bill was the Missouri Department of Public Safety.