

HCS HB 504 -- PAROLE ELIGIBILITY

SPONSOR: Toalson Reisch

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Special Committee on Criminal Justice by a vote of 10 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 504.

This bill specifies that any offender sentenced under Subsection 2 or 3 of Section 195.295, RSMo, relating to convictions for drug trafficking in the second degree, or section 195.296, relating to convictions for trafficking drugs in the first degree, prior to January 1, 2017, when the sections were repealed, will be eligible for parole after having served 10 years of his or her sentence if the Parole Board determines that there is a strong and reasonable probability that the offender will not re-offend.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the intent of this bill is to fix the crack that let a few offenders fall through even though the statute has been repealed. A witness testified about the case of Demitrius Woods, who was mistakenly let out of prison and subsequently had his sentenced commuted by the Governor.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Toalson Reisch; Rebecca Shaw; and Dan Viets, Missouri Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say it would be good to open this up to more offenders who are not currently eligible for parole. The change would impact around 50 offenders, and it should not be a problem to implement the change because this would just entitle individuals to receive a parole hearing after 10 years. It does not mean they will necessarily be released.

Testifying on the bill was the Department Of Corrections.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.