

Rauner signs bills to further reforms to Illinois' criminal justice system

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CHICAGO – Governor Bruce Rauner today signed five bills aimed at reforming Illinois’ criminal justice system to focus on rehabilitation to reduce recidivism and help low level offenders find a brighter future. This package of bills specifically helps young people who have fallen on hard times find the help they need to get on a better track.

“We need to approach our criminal justice system with more compassion,” said Governor Rauner. “I want those who did something wrong to face punishment, but we must make sure that the punishment fits the crime. We need to explore new avenues so

that we're balancing punishment with rehabilitation and not needlessly tearing families and lives apart."

This is the latest step in the Rauner administration's attempt to reform the criminal justice system in Illinois. Within the first month of the administration, Governor Rauner created the Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform. Its job was to create recommendations that would transform Illinois' justice system to make it more responsive to the people it served, while also cutting down on the unnecessary incarcerations and costs. These bills, coupled with administrative changes, make reforms in the criminal justice system that will help safely reduce the number of prison admissions, the length of prison stays and reduce recidivism by increasing the chances of successful re-entry.

"Governor Rauner set out to make Illinois a more compassionate state and he is making good on that initiative," said Illinois Department of Corrections Director John Baldwin. "Today's bills will help ensure that we are giving young men and women a second chance at life. Instead of focusing on the past, we are attempting to rehabilitate people who have been incarcerated and create opportunities for low level offenders to build a future."

SB 3164 requires review of a pre-sentencing report, as well as an explanation of why incarceration is appropriate for offenders with no prior probation sentences or prison convictions prior to sentencing. Last year, nearly 60 percent of new prison admissions for Class 3 or 4 felonies had no prior convictions for violent crimes. Sending low-level offenders with no prior probation or other convictions inefficiently uses prison resources and potentially makes low-level offenders more susceptible to reoffending. This legislation was sponsored by Sen. Michael Connelly and Rep. Brian Stewart and was a recommendation made by the Governor's Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform.

HB 6291 amends the Juvenile Court Act to change the minimum probation period for a youth adjudicated delinquent. The purpose of the bill is to help bring Illinois in line with other states and the latest research by reducing mandatory minimum lengths of probation and treating low level offenses with treatment. This ensures that youth struggling with addictions will have the opportunity to go through the treatment process before being sent to prison.

HB 5017 allows a juvenile to immediately petition the court for expungement when he or she is charged with an offense that is dismissed without a finding of delinquency. Under current law, the statute only allows for a petition of expungement when the youth has reached the age of 18. This bill will help youth who were arrested but not charged get a fresh start and clear their names.

HB 6200 addresses per minute rates of phone calls for inmates. The bill reduces the rate that the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice can contract for telephone providers.

SB 3005 amends the Park District Code to provide that a park district shall not knowingly employ a person who has been convicted of specified drug offenses until seven years following the end of a sentence imposed including periods of supervision or probation. The previous law stated that park districts could not employ any person convicted of the specified drug offenses. It furthermore scales pack prohibitions on employment for convictions of public indecency to Class 4 felonies.

The Governor also took action on the following bills:

Bill No.: HB 2569

An Act Concerning Criminal Law

Action: Signed

Effective: January 1, 2017

Bill No.: HB 4515

An Act Concerning Regulation

Action: Signed

Effective: January 1, 2017

Bill No.: HB 5572

An Act Concerning State Government

Action: Signed

Effective: Immediate

Bill No.: HB 5613

An Act Concerning the Law Enforcement Information Task Force Act

Action: Signed

Effective: Immediate

Bill No.: HB 5771

An Act Concerning Criminal Law

Action: Signed

Effective: January 1, 2017

Bill No.: HB 5973

An Act Concerning Regulation

Action: Signed

Effective: January 1, 2017

Bill No.: HB 6037

An Act Concerning Criminal Law

Action: Signed

Effective: Immediate

Bill No.: HB 6324

An Act Concerning State Government

Action: Signed

Effective: Immediate

Bill No.: HB 6328

An Act Concerning State Government

Action: Signed

Effective: January 1, 2017

Bill No.: SB 2370

An Act Concerning Criminal Law

Action: Signed

Effective: January 1, 2017

Bill No.: SB 2885

An Act Concerning Criminal Law

Action: Signed

Effective: January 1, 2017