

1 AN ACT concerning criminal law.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Re-Entering Citizens Civics Education Act.

6 Section 5. Definitions. In this Act:

7 "Committed person" means a person committed to the
8 Department.

9 "Commitment" means a judicially determined placement in
10 the custody of the Department of Corrections or the Department
11 of Juvenile Justice on the basis of conviction or delinquency.

12 "Correctional institution or facility" means a Department
13 of Corrections or Department of Juvenile Justice building or
14 part of a Department of Corrections or Department of Juvenile
15 Justice building where committed persons are detained in a
16 secure manner.

17 "Department" includes the Department of Corrections and
18 the Department of Juvenile Justice, unless the text solely
19 specifies a particular Department.

20 "Detainee" means a committed person in the physical custody
21 of the Department of Corrections or the Department of Juvenile
22 Justice.

23 "Director" includes the Director of the Department of

1 Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice unless the
2 text solely specifies a particular Director.

3 "Discharge" means the end of a sentence or the final
4 termination of a detainee's physical commitment to and
5 confinement in the Department of Corrections or Department of
6 Juvenile Justice.

7 "Peer educator" means an incarcerated citizen who is
8 specifically trained in voting rights education, who shall
9 conduct voting and civics education workshops for detainees
10 scheduled for discharge within 12 months.

11 "Program" means the nonpartisan peer education and
12 information instruction established by this Act.

13 "Re-entering citizen" means any United States citizen who
14 is: 17 years of age or older; in the physical custody of the
15 Department of Corrections or Department of Juvenile Justice;
16 and scheduled to be re-entering society within 12 months.

17 Section 10. Purpose; program. The Department of
18 Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice shall
19 provide a nonpartisan peer-led civics program throughout the
20 correctional institutions of this State to teach civics to
21 soon-to-be released citizens who will be re-entering society.
22 The goal of the program is to promote the successful
23 integration of re-entering citizens, promote democracy, and
24 reduce rates of recidivism within this State. This program
25 shall coincide with and enhance existing laws to ensure that

1 re-entering citizens understand their civic responsibility and
2 know how to secure or regain their right to vote as part of the
3 exit process.

4 Section 15. Curriculum and eligibility. The civics peer
5 education program shall consist of a rigorous curriculum, and
6 participants shall be instructed on subjects including, but not
7 limited to, voting rights, governmental institutions, current
8 affairs, and simulations of voter registration, election, and
9 democratic processes. Each workshop shall consist of 3 sessions
10 that are 90 minutes each and that do not need to be taken
11 consecutively. The Department must offer re-entering citizens
12 scheduled to be discharged within 12 months with the civics
13 peer education program, and each re-entering citizen must
14 enroll in the program one to 12 months prior to his or her
15 expected date of release. This workshop must be included in the
16 standard exit process. The Department should aim to include
17 this workshop in conjunction with other pre-release procedures
18 and movements. Delays in a workshop being provided shall not
19 cause delays in discharge. Detainees may not be prevented from
20 attending workshops due to staffing shortages, lockdowns, or to
21 conflicts with family or legal visits, court dates, medical
22 appointments, commissary visits, recreational sessions,
23 dining, work, class, or bathing schedules. In case of conflict
24 or staffing shortages, re-entering citizens must be given full
25 opportunity to attend a workshop at a later time.

1 Section 20. Peer educator training. The civics peer
2 education program shall be taught by peer educators who are
3 citizens incarcerated in Department of Corrections and
4 Department of Juvenile Justice facilities and specially
5 trained by experienced peer educators and established
6 nonpartisan civic organizations. Established nonpartisan civic
7 organizations may be assisted by area political science or
8 civics educators at colleges, universities, and high schools
9 and by nonpartisan organizations providing re-entry services.
10 The nonpartisan civic organizations shall provide adequate
11 training to peer educators on matters including, but not
12 limited to, voting rights, governmental institutions, current
13 affairs, and simulations of voter registration, election, and
14 democratic processes, and shall provide periodic updates to
15 program content and to peer educators.

16 Section 25. Voter and civic education program; content.

17 (a) Program content shall provide the following:

18 (1) nonpartisan information on voting history
19 procedures;

20 (2) nonpartisan definitions of local, State, and
21 federal governmental institutions and offices; and

22 (3) examples and simulations of registration and
23 voting processes.

24 (b) Established nonpartisan civic organizations shall

1 provide periodic updates to program content and, if applicable,
2 peer educators. Updates shall reflect major relevant changes to
3 election laws and processes in Illinois.

4 (c) Program content shall be delivered in the following
5 manners:

6 (1) verbally via peer educators;

7 (2) broadcasts via Department of Corrections and
8 Department of Juvenile Justice internal television
9 channels; or

10 (3) printed information packets.

11 (d) Peer educators shall disseminate printed information
12 for voting in the releasee's county, including, but not limited
13 to, election authorities' addresses, all applicable Internet
14 websites, and public contact information for all election
15 authorities. This information shall be compiled into a civics
16 handbook. The handbook shall also include key information
17 condensed into a pocket information card.

18 (e) This information shall also be compiled electronically
19 and posted on Department of Corrections' website along with the
20 Department of Corrections' Community Support Advisory Councils
21 websites.

22 (f) Department Directors shall ensure that the wardens or
23 superintendents of all correctional institutions and
24 facilities visibly post this information on all common areas of
25 their respective institutions, and shall broadcast the same via
26 in-house institutional information television channels.

1 Directors shall ensure that updated information is distributed
2 in a timely, visible, and accessible manner.

3 (g) The Director of Corrections shall order, in a clearly
4 visible area of each parole office within this State, the
5 posting of a notice stipulating voter eligibility and that
6 contains the current Internet website address and voter
7 registration information provided by State Board of Elections
8 regarding voting rights for citizens released from the custody
9 of the Department.

10 (h) All program content and materials shall be distributed
11 annually to the Community Support Advisory Councils of the
12 Department of Corrections for use in re-entry programs across
13 this State.

14 Section 30. Power of the Department. The Department of
15 Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice shall adopt
16 rules to carry out this Act within 6 months after the effective
17 date of this Act.

18 Section 35. Funding. The funding for the voting rights and
19 registration peer education program shall be subject to
20 appropriation by the General Assembly. The Department may use
21 private or federal funding to administer the program,
22 including, but not limited to, funds from the United States
23 Department of Justice.

1 Section 40. Voter and civic education program monitoring
2 and enforcement.

3 (a) The Director of Corrections and the Director of
4 Juvenile Justice shall ensure that wardens or superintendents,
5 program, educational, and security and movement staff permit
6 these workshops to take place, and that re-entering citizens
7 are escorted to workshops in a consistent and timely manner.

8 (b) Compliance with this Act shall be monitored by a report
9 published annually by the Department of Corrections and the
10 Department of Juvenile Justice and containing data, including
11 numbers of re-entering citizens who enrolled in the program,
12 numbers of re-entering citizens who completed the program, and
13 total numbers of individuals discharged. Data shall be
14 disaggregated by institution, discharge, or residence address
15 of citizen, and other factors.

16 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect on
17 January 1, 2020.