

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 458

BY REPRESENTATIVE KNOX

CORRECTIONS/PRISONERS: Provides relative to inmates who participate in work release programs

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 15:711, relative to work release programs; to provide for
3 purposes relative to work release programs; to provide relative to the assessment of
4 costs for participation in work release programs; to provide relative to the
5 disbursement of wages; to provide relative to the wages earned for participation in
6 work release programs; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 15:711 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

9 §711. Work release program

10 A. The Louisiana Legislature hereby authorizes the establishment and
11 administration of work release programs for the purpose of aiding the transition of
12 an inmate from confinement to release by re-acclimating him to society, acquiring
13 work history and job skills, and allowing for financial savings and educational
14 opportunities.

15 B. The sheriff of each parish, and in Orleans Parish, the criminal sheriff, ~~is~~
16 ~~hereby authorized to~~ may establish and administer a work release program for
17 inmates of any jail or prison under his jurisdiction. In the event that the inmate is
18 confined to a parish correctional facility not operated by the sheriff, then the
19 superintendent of the correctional facility ~~is hereby authorized to~~ may establish and
20 administer a work release program for inmates of the correctional facility under his

1 jurisdiction, and where the word "sheriff" is used ~~herein it shall also mean~~ in this
2 Section, the term also means the superintendent of the correctional facility ~~wherein~~
3 where the inmate is confined.

4 ~~B. C.~~ C. Each sheriff shall establish written rules for the administration of the
5 work release program and shall determine those inmates who may participate in the
6 release program, except that no inmate may participate in the program if his sentence
7 so stipulates. Inmates sentenced to the Department of Corrections who are in the
8 custody of the sheriff shall not be eligible for work release unless such inmates are
9 in compliance with standards for work release within the department and written
10 approval of the secretary of the department is obtained. If any inmate violates the
11 conditions prescribed by the sheriff, his work release privileges may be withdrawn.
12 Failure to report to or return from the planned employment shall be considered an
13 escape under the provisions of R.S. 14:110. The sheriff may approve as work release
14 privileges, placement in universities, colleges, technical, vocational or trade schools
15 or in sheltered workshops or supported employment providers as defined in R.S.
16 39:1604.4, or in training programs designed to improve the skills and abilities of the
17 inmate.

18 ~~C. Every~~ D.(1) Subject to the restrictions provided in Paragraph (2) of this
19 Subsection, every inmate ~~with~~ who participates in a work release ~~privileges shall be~~
20 ~~liable for the~~ program may be assessed a reasonable cost of his for room; and board;
21 ~~clothing and other necessary expenses incident to his employment or placement.~~

22 (2) The total amount assessed for room and board shall not exceed
23 thirty-three percent of the inmate's gross wages that are earned through a work
24 release program. No additional per diem or related charge shall be imposed beyond
25 the amount provided in this Paragraph.

26 ~~D. E.~~ E. The sheriff or his designated agent shall collect the wages of any
27 employed inmate, ~~so employed shall be collected by the sheriff or by his designated~~
28 ~~agent, and the sheriff shall deposit the same~~ wages in a public banking institution,
29 and keep a ledger showing the financial status of each inmate ~~on~~ in the program.

1 ~~E. The wages~~ F. The sheriff shall disburse the wages of any ~~such~~ inmate
2 ~~shall be disbursed by the sheriff for the following purposes and in the order stated~~
3 ~~who participates in a work release program in the following order:~~

4 (1) ~~The board of the inmate including food, clothing, medical, and dental~~
5 ~~expenses~~ An assessment for room and board, not to exceed thirty-three percent of the
6 inmate's gross wages.

7 (2) Necessary travel ~~expense~~ expenses to and from work and other ~~incidental~~
8 ~~expenses of the inmate~~ expenses related to documented employment.

9 (3) Support of the inmate's dependents, if any applicable.

10 (4) Payment, ~~either in full or ratably of the inmate's obligations~~
11 ~~acknowledged by him in writing, or which have been reduced to judgment of any~~
12 ~~court ordered-restitution or legally recognized obligations.~~

13 (5) ~~The balance, if any, to the inmate upon his discharge~~ The remaining
14 balance, payable directly to the inmate on a regular basis, and not subject to any
15 withholding except as provided in this Section.

16 G. After receiving the disbursements provided in Subsection F of this
17 Section, the inmate shall retain the remaining portion of his earned wages. No
18 additional per diem, administrative fee, or supplemental housing charge shall be
19 assessed beyond the total amount provided in Paragraph (D)(2) of this Section.

20 ~~F. H.~~ H. The wages of an employee inmate ~~so employed~~ shall ~~be~~ not be less
21 than the customary wages for an employee performing similar services.

22 ~~G. I.~~ I.(1) Any inmate who has been convicted of forcible or second degree
23 rape (R.S. 14:42.1), aggravated arson (R.S. 14:51), armed robbery (R.S. 14:64),
24 attempted murder (R.S. 14:27 and 29), attempted armed robbery (R.S. 14:27 and 64),
25 and persons sentenced as habitual offenders under R.S. 15:529.1 shall be eligible to
26 participate in a work release program during the last six months of their terms.
27 Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section and unless the inmate is eligible at an
28 earlier date, those inmates who have served a minimum of fifteen years in the
29 custody of the department or the sheriff for those crimes enumerated in this Section;

1 shall be eligible to participate in a work release program during the last twelve
2 months of their ~~term~~ terms.

3 (2) Any inmate convicted of producing, manufacturing, distributing, ~~or~~
4 dispensing, or possession with intent to produce, manufacture, distribute, or dispense
5 a controlled dangerous substance classified in R.S. 40:964 shall be eligible to
6 participate in the work release program if the inmate is otherwise in compliance with
7 the standards for work release.

8 H. J. No inmate employed in the work release program shall be employed
9 in a position which would necessitate his departure from the state except for those
10 inmates assigned to work release programs who are employed in industries off the
11 coast of Louisiana.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 458 Original

2026 Regular Session

Knox

Abstract: Provides relative to inmates who participate in work release programs.

Present law provides relative to work release programs.

Proposed law retains present law.

Proposed law provides for the establishment and administration of work release programs for certain purposes.

Present law provides that every inmate with work release privileges is liable for the costs of his room, board, clothing and other necessary expenses incident to his employment or placement.

Proposed law amends present law to remove the reference to liability of cost for clothing and other necessary expenses incident to the inmate's employment or placement and provides that every inmate who participates in a work release program may be assessed a reasonable cost for room and board, subject to the restrictions provided in proposed law.

Proposed law prohibits the total amount assessed for room and board from exceeding 33% of the inmate's gross wages that are earned through a work release program. Further prohibits any additional per diem or related charge beyond the amount provided in proposed law.

Present law requires the sheriff to disburse the wages of an inmate for certain purposes and in a particular order.

Proposed law amends present law to change the disbursements as follows:

- (1) From the board of the inmate that includes food, clothing, medical, and dental expenses to an assessment for room and board, not to exceed 33% the inmate's gross wages.
- (2) From necessary travel expenses to and from work and other incidental expenses of the inmate to necessary travel expenses to and from work and other expenses related to documented employment.
- (3) From payment of the inmate's legal obligations to payment of any court-ordered restitution or legally recognized obligations.
- (4) From any balance to the inmate upon his discharge to the remaining balance, payable directly to the inmate on a regular basis, and not subject to any withholding except as provided in present law.

Proposed law provides that after receiving the disbursements provided in proposed law, the inmate retains the remaining portion of his earned wages. Further prohibits the assessment of any additional per diem, administrative fee, or supplemental housing charge beyond the total amount provided in proposed law.

(Amends R.S. 15:711)