

CHAPTER 312

AN ACT establishing an Inmate Education and Vocational Training Study Commission.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. There is established an Inmate Education and Vocational Training Study Commission. The commission shall consist of nineteen members as follows: two members of the Senate, no more than one of whom shall be of the same political party, appointed by the President of the Senate; two members of the General Assembly, no more than one of whom shall be of the same political party, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; the Commissioner of Corrections, ex-officio, or his designee; the Commissioner of Education, ex-officio, or his designee; the Commissioner of Human Services, ex-officio, or his designee; the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, ex-officio, or his designee; the Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission, ex-officio, or his designee; the Chairman of the State Parole Board, ex-officio, or his designee; representative of the judicial branch, appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; a representative of the county prosecutors, appointed by the Attorney General; and seven public members appointed by the Governor, who shall include: an ordained clergyman; two members appointed from nominees proposed by Statewide business organizations; three members appointed from nominees proposed by Statewide education organizations; and one member representing vocational or trade schools.

b. Appointments shall be made within 90 days after the effective date of this act. The appointed members of the commission shall serve until their commission's expire. Vacancies in the membership of the appointed members of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

c. The members shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the commission from such funds as may be provided for this purpose.

d. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable after the appointments are made and select a chairperson from among its members. The commission shall meet at least quarterly and may hold meetings and hearings at such places and times as it designates. No action shall be taken by the commission except by an affirmative vote of a majority of the full membership of the commission.

2. The commission shall inventory and evaluate educational and vocational training programs offered to inmates in the State's adult correctional facilities and secure juvenile facilities administered by the Juvenile Justice Commission. The commission shall seek to determine the effect of these programs on inmate rehabilitation and the rate of inmate recidivism. The commission shall study the relationship between crimes committed, educational and vocational training opportunities, and recidivism. The commission also shall identify characteristics which contribute to the success of corrections education and vocational training programs. The commission shall make recommendations for statutory or administrative changes in education and vocational training policy based on its findings.

3. a. The commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature not later than 24 months after the date of its organization. The report shall include any draft legislation needed to implement recommendations of the report.

b. The commission may hold public hearings and shall have access to relevant files and records of the Department of Corrections, the Juvenile Justice Commission and other relevant State agencies, and may call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of those agencies to provide whatever information the commission considers relevant and necessary in the performance of its functions. The commission may employ such professional, stenographic, and clerical assistance as it may deem necessary in order to perform its duties, to the extent that funds may be provided for this purpose. Any information obtained from or about any person or organization by the commission shall be retained solely for the use of the commission in the implementation of this act, and shall not be disclosed except as part of a report made by the commission pursuant to this act. No report of the commission shall include information which is identifiable with any specific person or organization without the written consent of the person or organization.

4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon the issuance of the commission's final report.

Approved January 12, 2006.