



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

March 20, 2026

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H.559 – An act relating to the Parole Board

As passed by the House of Representatives¹

Bill Summary

This bill requires regular training for the Parole Board on a variety of topics, makes several changes to the Parole Board and its Director's roles and responsibilities, creates and funds a Parole Board Legal Counsel Pilot Project, and contains several provisions related to the Parole Board's budget development process.

Fiscal Impact

The bill creates a Parole Board Legal Counsel Pilot Project, funded with \$75,000 of General Fund in fiscal year 2027 to the Department of Corrections (DOC) – using \$25,000 of carryforward funds from fiscal year 2026 and a \$50,000 appropriation in fiscal year 2027.

Background and Details

The following sections are relevant to fiscal matters:

Sections 1-3: Training for Parole Board

Section 1 would require the Commissioner of Corrections to provide regular training for the Parole Board, at least annually, in collaboration with the Parole Board Director and the chair of the Parole Board, on topics related to criminogenic behavior, mental health disorders, substance use treatment, trauma-informed work with victims of crime, and serious crime rehabilitation. Section 2 requires each member of the Parole Board to, at least annually, attend trainings designated by the Parole Board Director in collaboration with the Chair of the Parole Board. Section 3 requires the Parole Board Director to develop and provide this training to the Board, in collaboration with the Commissioner and Chair of the Board.

The trainings required in Section 1, which are different in scope than the due process-oriented trainings proposed to be performed through the pilot project created elsewhere in the bill, would be absorbed in the DOC budget.

¹ The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) is a nonpartisan legislative office dedicated to producing unbiased fiscal analysis – this fiscal note is meant to provide information for legislative consideration, not to provide policy recommendations.

Section 2: Parole Board

Currently, the Parole Board is comprised of five regular members and two alternates. This section would modify the Board composition from five to seven members, but remove the two alternates, so the Board would remain at seven total members. Other than the Chair, who is compensated \$20,500 annually, Board members are compensated \$100 per diem plus expense reimbursements. The bill neither changes compensation nor the number of compensated Board members. No fiscal impact is expected.

Section 4: Parole Board Legal Counsel Pilot Project

This section would create a Parole Board Legal Counsel Pilot Project to provide external legal support for:

- annual training to the Board, including on topics related to due process and parole violations; and
- legal advice to the Board as needed related to Board hearings

The Office of the Attorney General would be required to coordinate with the Board and the Agency of Human Services (AHS) to identify and contract with external legal support.

Sections 5 and 6 provide \$75,000 of General Fund in fiscal year 2027 for hiring external legal counsel pursuant to this section.

Section 4 requires AHS and DOC to coordinate with the Director to evaluate the pilot project and determine resources needed for the Board's external legal support for fiscal year 2028. The Director would be required to submit a written report to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions on or before November 15, 2026 detailing the operation of the pilot project. The report shall include a recommendation regarding legal support for the Board going forward and the resources needed. The report is due prior to the General Assembly convening to begin its work on the fiscal year 2028 budget.

Section 5: DOC Fiscal Year 2026 Carryforward

This section stipulates that \$25,000 of the General Fund appropriated to DOC in fiscal year 2026 for third-party legal services in Act 27 (2025), Sec. B.336 (Department of Corrections – Parole Board) shall carry forward into fiscal year 2027 for the purpose of hiring external legal counsel pursuant to Section 4 of the bill.

Section 6: Fiscal Year 2027 Appropriation

Section 6 appropriates \$50,000 from the General Fund to DOC in fiscal year 2027 for the purpose of hiring external legal counsel pursuant to Section 4 of the bill.

Section 7: Parole Board Budget Submission in Fiscal Years 2028 and 2029

The Parole Board is funded through a separate appropriation to DOC (B.336 of the Big Bill), and the development of its budget is traditionally managed by the Department. Section 7 would require the Parole Board Director to, as part of the budget development processes for fiscal year 2028 and 2029, submit a proposed budget to the Commissioner of Corrections and Secretary of Human Services. This section would also require the Director to, on or before December 15, 2027, submit a written report to the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions detailing the budget development process. This report shall include a recommendation regarding the Parole Board submitting an annual budget to the Commissioner of Corrections.

This provision is not expected to have a direct fiscal impact but is a formal change of practice from prior years to the budget development process among the relevant agencies and departments because it requires the Parole Board Director to submit a budget proposal.

ⁱ The full fiscal note history is available on the fiscal tab of the bill page on the General Assembly website and can be pulled up through a bill number search on the JFO page.