

From:
To: sunset.website@brightleafgroup.com
Subject: Prolonging incarceration because of school bus stops.
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TDCJ has a policy that holds men in prison beyond their parole release date because of their inability to find what The Parole Board considers suitable housing. Men with a sex offense conviction against a minor must have a home plan that lists a residence more than 500 feet from a school bus stop. There is no good reason to include bus stops as “safety zones.” Together with other TDCJ restrictions and community prohibitions, most housing in towns is unavailable. Ostensibly, the policy’s intent is to reduce the likelihood of parolees committing new sex crimes. If so, it betrays a deplorable ignorance about how recidivism typically occurs. The average fearful citizen and uninformed bureaucrat seems to believe that sex crimes are frequently committed against strangers. That is not the case. Sex crimes are rarely random and, when they are, that randomness makes them impossible to predict. So-called safety zones that exclude parolees from certain places simply miss the point that most sex crimes are committed against persons already known. Such zones are pointless.

This policy that prevents release works hardship on the prison system, the parolee, and his family. It is an absurd “catch twenty-two” unusually cruel in its effect, even for Texas. It should be deleted from prison policy immediately.

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