



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 768

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 7133

House of Representatives, April 24, 2025

The Committee on Judiciary reported through REP. STAFSTROM of the 129th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING PAROLE ELIGIBILITY.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subdivision (1) of subsection (g) of section 54-125a of the
2 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
3 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2025*):

4 (g) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) to [(f)] (e),
5 inclusive, of this section, and except as provided in subsection (f) of this
6 section, a person convicted of one or more crimes committed while such
7 person was under twenty-one years of age [, who was sentenced on or
8 before October 1, 2005, and] who received a definite sentence or total
9 effective sentence of more than ten years' incarceration for such crime
10 or crimes [committed on or before October 1, 2005,] may be allowed to
11 go at large on parole in the discretion of the panel of the Board of
12 Pardons and Paroles for the institution in which such person is confined,
13 provided (A) if such person is serving a sentence of fifty years or less,
14 such person shall be eligible for parole after serving sixty per cent of the
15 sentence or twelve years, whichever is greater, or (B) if such person is

16 serving a sentence of more than fifty years, such person shall be eligible
17 for parole after serving thirty years. Nothing in this subsection shall
18 limit a person's eligibility for parole release under the provisions of
19 subsections (a) to (f), inclusive, of this section if such person would be
20 eligible for parole release at an earlier date under any of such provisions.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	October 1, 2025	54-125a(g)(1)

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Subsec. (g)(1), the subsection (f) reference in the notwithstanding provision was adjusted to provide for an exception to avoid repetition with the existing provisions of subsection (f).

JUD *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Department of Correction (Board of Pardons and Parole)	GF - Potential Cost	None	See Below
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Potential Cost	None	See Below
Correction, Dept.	GF - Potential Savings	None	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill, which expands parole eligibility to certain offenders who committed their crimes between the ages of 18 and 21, results in a potential cost to the Board of Pardons and Paroles and the State Comptroller – Fringe Benefits and a potential savings to the Department of Correction for reduced incarceration beginning in FY 27. On average, the marginal cost to the state for incarcerating an offender for the year is \$3,300.²

The potential cost to the Board of Pardons and Paroles depends on the extent to which the board will need to hold more hearings per month to accommodate an increase in parole applications. If the number of additional hearings is great enough, the board may need to hire additional parole officers to interview applicants, conduct risk

¹ The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active hazardous duty employee fringe benefit cost is 49.15% of payroll in FY 26.

² Inmate marginal cost is based on increased consumables (e.g., food, clothing, water, sewage, living supplies, etc.).

assessments, and complete comprehensive summaries that provide board members with information regarding an applicant's criminal, social, and correctional history, as well as details of their current offense(s). The annual salary for a parole officer is \$78,931, requiring estimated fringe benefits of \$38,795. Because these hearings require a one-year notice to the Public Defender's Office, the fiscal impact will not begin until FY 27.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of inmates granted parole. The number of inmates eligible for parole hearings under this bill is expected to decrease after the first year.

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 7133*****AN ACT CONCERNING PAROLE ELIGIBILITY.*****SUMMARY**

This bill extends to any offenders who committed their crimes between the ages of 18 and 21 an alternate parole eligibility rule that currently applies to those who (1) committed their offenses when under age 18 or (2) committed their offenses prior to October 1, 2005, when under age 21.

This alternative eligibility rule makes someone sentenced to (1) 10 to 50 years in prison eligible for parole after serving the greater of 12 years or 60% of his or her sentence or (2) more than 50 years in prison eligible for parole after serving 30 years. The alternative rule applies if it makes someone eligible for parole sooner than he or she would be otherwise, including someone who would otherwise be ineligible for parole.

As under existing law, under the bill, the Board of Pardons and Paroles (see BACKGROUND) must apply the above parole eligibility rule only with respect to the sentence for a crime or crimes committed while the person was under age 21. Any portion of a sentence that is based on a crime or crimes committed while the person was age 21 or older must be subject to the applicable parole eligibility, suitability, and release rules.

Existing eligibility rules and requirements on parole hearing and release decisions apply to inmates who are now parole-eligible under the bill.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

Required Hearing

When an offender becomes parole-eligible, under both existing law and the bill, the Board of Pardons and Paroles must (1) hold a parole suitability hearing and (2) at least 12 months before the hearing, notify the Chief Public Defender's Office, appropriate state's attorney, Department of Correction's (DOC's) Victim Services Unit, Office of the Victim Advocate, and Judicial Branch's Office of Victim Services. The Chief Public Defender's Office must provide counsel for an indigent inmate.

At the hearing, the law, unchanged by the bill, requires the board to allow (1) the inmate to make a statement, (2) the inmate's counsel and state's attorney to submit reports and documents, and (3) any victim of the crime to make a statement as with other parole hearings.

As part of the required hearing process, the board may also request (1) testimony from mental health professionals and relevant witnesses and (2) reports from DOC or others. The board must use validated risk and needs assessment tools and risk-based structured decision making and release criteria.

Release Decisions

The board may release the inmate on parole after a hearing if specified conditions are met, such as when it appears from all available information, including DOC reports, that (1) there is a reasonable probability the offender will not violate the law again and (2) the benefits of release to the offender and society substantially outweigh the benefits from continued confinement. This applies for offenders who are eligible under existing law, as well as those who are now eligible under the bill's provisions.

The law specifies that the board must consider whether an offender applied for or received a sentence modification when considering whether the person demonstrates rehabilitation. This requirement applies to release decisions for offenders eligible under existing law and those the bill makes eligible.

After a hearing, as for offenders who are eligible under existing law,

for offenders the bill makes eligible, the board (1) must articulate reasons for its decision on the record and (2) at its discretion, may reassess the person's suitability for a hearing at least two years after a denial. By law, the board's decisions under these provisions are not appealable.

BACKGROUND

Board of Pardons and Paroles

The Board of Pardons and Paroles is a board within DOC with independent decision-making authority to, among other things, (1) grant or deny parole, (2) establish parole conditions, (3) rescind or revoke parole or special parole, (4) grant commutations, (5) discharge any parolee or inmate eligible for parole from DOC custody, and (6) terminate special parole (CGS § 54-124a(f)).

Any decision of the board or a panel of the board must be made by a majority of the members present (CGS § 54-124a(p)). The board chairperson and the executive director must employ one psychologist with expertise in risk assessment and recidivism of criminal offenders to assist the board in parole release decisions (CGS § 54-124a(m)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29 Nay 12 (04/08/2025)