

Second Regular Session  
Seventy-first General Assembly  
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 18-0559.01 Richard Sweetman x4333

HOUSE BILL 18-1109

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HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Weissman,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Cooke,

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House Committees  
Judiciary

Senate Committees

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A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING DISCRETIONARY PAROLE OF SPECIAL NEEDS OFFENDERS.

Bill Summary

*(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)*

Current law provides 2 definitions by which an offender in the custody of the department of corrections (department) may be considered a "special needs offender". The first definition describes a person "who is 60 years of age or older and has been diagnosed by a licensed health care provider who is employed by or under contract with the department as suffering from a chronic infirmity, illness, condition, disease, or behavioral or mental health disorder and the department or the state board of parole (parole board) determines that the person is incapacitated to the

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.  
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing statute.  
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

extent that he or she is not likely to pose a risk to public safety". The bill amends this definition by changing "60 years" to "55 years".

The bill also adds a third definition by which such an offender may be considered a "special needs offender". That is, an offender who, as determined by a licensed health care provider who is employed by or under contract with the department, on the basis of available evidence, not including evidence resulting from a refusal of the person to accept treatment, does not have a substantial probability of being restored to competency and is not likely to pose a risk to public safety.

Under current law, if the department recommends to the parole board that an offender be released to parole as a special needs offender, the parole board may deny parole only by a majority vote of the parole board. The bill states that to deny parole under such conditions, the parole board must also make a finding that granting parole would create a threat to public safety and that the offender is likely to commit an offense.

The bill states that if, prior to or during any parole hearing, the parole board or any member of the parole board has a substantial and good-faith reason to believe that the offender is incompetent to proceed, the parole board shall suspend all proceedings and notify the trial court that imposed any active sentence, and the court shall determine the competency or incompetency of the offender.

For any offender who is granted special needs parole, the parole board shall set the length of the parole for an appropriate time period of at least 6 months but not exceeding 36 months. At any time during such an offender's parole, the parole board may revise the duration of the offender's parole. However, in no case may such an offender be required to serve a period of parole in excess of the period of parole to which he or she would otherwise be sentenced, or 36 months, whichever is less.

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1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 17-1-102, **amend**  
3 (7.5)(a)(I) and (7.5)(a)(II); and **add** (7.5)(a)(IV) as follows:

4 **17-1-102. Definitions.** As used in this title 17, unless the context  
5 otherwise requires:

6 (7.5) (a) "Special needs offender" means a person in the custody  
7 of the department:

8 (I) Who is ~~sixty~~ FIFTY-FIVE years of age or older and has been  
9 diagnosed by a licensed health care provider who is employed by or under

1 contract with the department as suffering from a chronic infirmity, illness,  
2 condition, disease, or behavioral or mental health disorder and the  
3 department or the state board of parole determines that the person is  
4 incapacitated to the extent that he or she is not likely to pose a risk to  
5 public safety; ~~or~~

6 (II) Who, as determined by a licensed health care provider who is  
7 employed by or under contract with the department, suffers from a  
8 chronic, permanent, terminal, or irreversible physical illness, condition,  
9 disease, or a behavioral or mental health disorder that requires costly care  
10 or treatment and who is determined by the department or the state board  
11 of parole to be incapacitated to the extent that he or she is not likely to  
12 pose a risk to public safety; OR

13 (IV) WHO, AS DETERMINED BY A LICENSED HEALTH CARE  
14 PROVIDER WHO IS EMPLOYED BY OR UNDER CONTRACT WITH THE  
15 DEPARTMENT, ON THE BASIS OF AVAILABLE EVIDENCE, NOT INCLUDING  
16 EVIDENCE RESULTING FROM A REFUSAL OF THE PERSON TO ACCEPT  
17 TREATMENT, DOES NOT HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL PROBABILITY OF BEING  
18 RESTORED TO COMPETENCY AND IS NOT LIKELY TO POSE A RISK TO PUBLIC  
19 SAFETY. AS USED IN THIS SUBSECTION (7)(a)(IV), "COMPETENCY" HAS THE  
20 SAME MEANING AS "COMPETENT TO PROCEED", AS DEFINED IN SECTION  
21 16-8.5-101 (4).

22 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 17-22.5-403.5,  
23 **amend** (4)(d) and (5); and **add** (7) as follows:

24 **17-22.5-403.5. Special needs parole.** (4) (d) The state board of  
25 parole shall make a determination of whether to grant special needs  
26 parole within thirty days after receiving the referral from the department.  
27 The board may delay the decision in order to request that the department

1 modify the special needs parole plan. IF, PRIOR TO OR DURING ANY  
2 PAROLE HEARING, THE BOARD OR ANY MEMBER OF THE BOARD HAS A  
3 SUBSTANTIAL AND GOOD-FAITH REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE OFFENDER  
4 IS INCOMPETENT TO PROCEED, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 16-8.5-101 (11),  
5 THE BOARD SHALL SUSPEND ALL PROCEEDINGS AND NOTIFY THE TRIAL  
6 COURT THAT IMPOSED ANY ACTIVE SENTENCE, AND THE COURT SHALL  
7 DETERMINE THE COMPETENCY OR INCOMPETENCY OF THE DEFENDANT  
8 PURSUANT TO SECTION 16-8.5-103. THE OFFENDER HAS THE RIGHT TO BE  
9 REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL AT THE HEARING. IF THE OFFENDER IS  
10 DETERMINED TO BE INDIGENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 21-1-103, THE COURT  
11 SHALL APPOINT THE OFFICE OF THE STATE PUBLIC DEFENDER OR, IN THE  
12 CASE OF A CONFLICT, THE OFFICE OF ALTERNATE DEFENSE COUNSEL.

13 (5) The board may consider the application for special needs  
14 parole pursuant to the proceedings set forth in section 17-2-201 (4)(f) or  
15 17-2-201 (9)(a). If the department recommends to the state board of  
16 parole that an offender be released to parole as a special needs offender  
17 pursuant to the provisions of subsection (1) of this section, the board may  
18 deny parole only by a majority vote of the board AND ONLY IF THE BOARD  
19 MAKES A FINDING THAT GRANTING PAROLE WOULD CREATE A THREAT TO  
20 PUBLIC SAFETY AND THAT THE OFFENDER IS LIKELY TO COMMIT AN  
21 OFFENSE.

22 (7) FOR ANY OFFENDER WHO IS GRANTED SPECIAL NEEDS PAROLE  
23 PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION, THE STATE BOARD OF PAROLE SHALL SET THE  
24 LENGTH OF THE PAROLE FOR AN APPROPRIATE TIME PERIOD OF AT LEAST  
25 SIX MONTHS BUT NOT EXCEEDING THIRTY-SIX MONTHS. AT ANY TIME  
26 DURING THE OFFENDER'S PAROLE, THE STATE BOARD OF PAROLE MAY  
27 REVISE THE DURATION OF THE PAROLE. HOWEVER, IN NO CASE MAY SUCH

1 AN OFFENDER BE REQUIRED TO SERVE A PERIOD OF PAROLE IN EXCESS OF  
2 THE PERIOD OF PAROLE TO WHICH HE OR SHE WOULD OTHERWISE BE  
3 SENTENCED PURSUANT TO SECTION 18-1.3-401 (1)(a)(V)(A), OR  
4 THIRTY-SIX MONTHS, WHICHEVER IS LESS.

5 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 16-8.5-102, **amend**  
6 (2)(c); and **add** (2)(d) as follows:

7 **16-8.5-102. Mental incompetency to proceed - how and when**  
8 **raised.** (2) The question of a defendant's competency to proceed shall be  
9 raised in the following manner:

10 (c) By the affidavit of any chief officer of an institution having  
11 custody of a defendant awaiting execution; OR

12 (d) BY THE STATE BOARD OF PAROLE WHEN A BOARD MEMBER HAS  
13 A SUBSTANTIAL AND GOOD-FAITH REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE  
14 OFFENDER IS INCOMPETENT TO PROCEED, AS DEFINED IN SECTION  
15 16-8.5-101 (11), AT A PAROLE HEARING CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO  
16 SECTION 17-22.5-403.5.

17 **SECTION 4. Applicability.** This act applies to applications for  
18 special needs parole that are received by the state board of parole on or  
19 after the effective date of this act.

20 **SECTION 5. Safety clause.** The general assembly hereby finds,  
21 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate  
22 preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.