

Senate Judiciary Committee

Pete Mulvey 271-4063

HB 57, relative to a person's release from prison for the purpose of participating in certain post-secondary education programs in the community.

Hearing Date: May 15, 2025

Time Opened: 3:30 p.m.

Time Closed: 3:39 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Gannon, McConkey and Reardon

Members of the Committee Absent : Senators Abbas and Altschiller

Bill Analysis: This bill adds a provision for the commissioner of corrections to release a person from state prison for the purpose of participating in a post-secondary education program in the community to which they have been accepted.

Sponsors:

Rep. Meuse

Who supports the bill: 41 individuals supported HB 57. Contact peter.mulvey@gc.nh.gov for further details.

Who opposes the bill: one individual opposed HB 57. Contact peter.mulvey@gc.nh.gov for further details.

Who is neutral on the bill: N/A

Summary of testimony:

Representative David Meuse

Rockingham – District 37

- House Bill 57 was submitted at the request of the Department of Corrections.
- The bill would enable those approved for administrative home confinement to participate in post-secondary educational opportunities in the community.
- These include college courses, vocational courses, and more.
- The current law enabled residents in the state prison system approved for administrative home confinement to be employed or participate in unpaid community service outside of the home.
- The bill does not modify eligibility for the program or any other aspect of the law, or the Department's policies surrounding administrative home confinement.
- The administrative home confinement program is not available to everyone. Those with violent tendencies, behavioral issues, or DUIs are not eligible for administrative home confinement.

- Administrative home confinement is separate from parole, may be applied for within 18 months of the sentences' commencement, and requires the approval of a judge and prosecutor.
- Tuition would be the responsibility of the inmate, and there would be no educational expense for the State of New Hampshire.
- Incarcerated individuals participating in college programs are significantly less likely to reoffend and enjoy higher employment rates.
- Sen. Gannon asked how the bill came out of committee
 - Rep. Meuse said the bill passed unanimously and later passed by voice vote on the house consent calendar.

Nicholas Duffy

Director, Rehabilitative Services – N.H Department of Corrections

- Mr. Duffy supported the bill.
- Inmates would be responsible for programming support, housing, and financing of the program/education in general.
- The bill largely enabled post-secondary educational services.
- Sen. McConkey asked for clarity on who would not be allowed to participate according to the Department's testimony letter.
 - Mr. Duffy said that the 11 types of individuals listed in fact could not participate.

Janelle LaPlante

Psychology Researcher, Chan Medical School – University of Massachusetts

- Ms. LaPlante supported the bill.
- Employment and education are beneficial toward socialization and rehabilitation for inmates.
- HB 57 would empower people to make more productive decisions.

PM

Date Hearing Report completed: May 20, 2025