

THIRD READING

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Bill No: SB 1012  
Author: Smallwood-Cuevas (D)  
Amended: 5/14/26  
Vote: 21

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SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE: 6-0, 4/14/26  
AYES: Arreguín, Seyarto, Caballero, Cortese, Pérez, Wiener

SENATE LABOR, PUB. EMP. & RET. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 4/22/26  
AYES: Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Cortese, Durazo, Laird

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 5/14/26  
AYES: Cervantes, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

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**SUBJECT:** Employment of inmates

**SOURCE:** Laborers' International Union of Northern California, California State Council of Laborers; NextGen Policy

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**DIGEST:** This bill requires the Pre-Release Construction Trades Certificate Program's joint advisory committee, in consultation with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), and the fire camp program, to facilitate the post-release admission of program graduates into any relevant state-approved apprenticeship and require state-approved apprenticeship programs in the building and construction trades to evaluate these individuals for admission with advanced standing; requires that successful completion of the fire camp program constitutes a qualifying experience for a state-approved apprenticeship in the building and construction trades; and requires CDCR, in partnership with Cal Fire and the fire camp program, to ensure that all individuals who complete the fire camp program receive a certification acknowledging their fire camp training and work experience to ensure eligibility for state-approved apprenticeship programs in the building and construction trades.

**ANALYSIS:**

## Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Prison to Employment program, administered by the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), to coordinate reentry and workforce services in each of the state's 14 workforce regions so that the formerly incarcerated and other justice-involved individuals in these regions can find and retain employment. (Unemployment Insurance (Unemp. Ins.) Code, §§ 14040-14042.)
- 2) Requires a career technical education program consider all of the following factors, consistent with the goals and priorities of CDCR:
  - a) Whether the program aligns with the workforce needs of high-demand sectors of the state and regional economies;
  - b) Whether there is an active job market for the skills being developed where the incarcerated person will likely be released;
  - c) Whether the program increases the number of incarcerated individuals who obtain a marketable and industry or apprenticeship board-recognized certification, credential, or degree;
  - d) Whether there are formal or informal networks in the field that support finding employment upon release from prison; and,
  - e) Whether the program will lead to employment in occupations with a livable wage. (Penal (Pen.) Code § 2053.5.)
- 3) Establishes the Pre-Release Construction Trades Certificate Program administered by CDCR to increase employment opportunities in the construction trades for incarcerated individuals upon release. (Pen. Code, § 2716.5, subd. (a).)
- 4) Requires CDCR to establish a joint advisory committee for the purpose of implementation of the program and specifies entities that must be represented on the committee. (Pen. Code, § 2716.5, subd. (b).)
- 5) Provides that the committee has the following responsibilities:

- a) Develop guidelines for the participation of inmates in preapprenticeship training programs. Requires the guidelines to provide for the integration, for all preapprenticeship training programs in the building and construction trades, of the multicraft core curriculum (MC3) implemented by the State Department of Education (CDE) for its California Partnership Academies pilot project and by the CWDB and local boards.
  - b) Develop and implement a prerelease construction trades certification that validates that an incarcerated person completed instruction, skills, and competencies required by and recognized by the participating building and construction trades.
  - c) Ensure compliance with any applicable requirements and regulations of the Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS).
  - d) Evaluate prerelease on-the-job training opportunities to compare and match competencies with those of registered apprentices in the building and construction trades.
  - e) Explore the feasibility of the electronic tracking of each participating person's relevant activities to efficiently capture competencies related to the certification.
  - f) Explore the prerelease awarding of formal credit for apprenticeship hours recognized by joint apprenticeship training programs and the DAS.
  - g) Facilitate the admission of graduates of preapprenticeship programs for incarcerated individuals, after release, into state-approved apprenticeship programs and for apprenticeship programs to evaluate such individuals for admission with advanced standing based on prior coursework and work experience. (Pen. Code, § 2716.5, subd. (b).)
- 6) Requires CWDB and each local workforce development board to ensure, to the maximum extent feasible, that federal respectively awarded by them for purposes of preapprenticeship training in the building and construction trades fund programs and services follow the MC3 implemented by CDE for its pilot project with California Partnership Academies. (Unemp. Ins. Code, § 14230, subd. (e)(2).)

This bill:

- 1) Amends the joint advisory committee's responsibility to facilitate the post-release admission of graduates of preapprenticeship programs for incarcerated individuals into state-approved apprenticeship programs, to include graduates of the fire camp program.

- 2) Requires the joint advisory committee, in consultation with CDCR, Cal Fire, DIR, and the fire camp program, to facilitate the admission of graduates of the program, after release, into any relevant state-approved apprenticeship and for state-approved apprenticeship programs in the building and construction trades, including those in general construction, to evaluate such individuals for admission with advanced standing based on prior coursework and work experience.
- 3) Requires that successful completion of fire camp programs, including, but not limited to, wildland firefighter training, such as environmental remediation and forestry management, emergency response, and hazardous waste cleanup, constitute qualifying experience for a state-approved apprenticeship in the building and construction trades under the DAS.
- 4) Requires CDCR, in partnership with Cal Fire and the fire camp program, to ensure that all individuals who complete the program receive a certification acknowledging their fire camp training and work experience to ensure eligibility for state-approved apprenticeship programs in the building and construction trades.
- 5) Provides that nothing in its provisions preclude state-approved apprenticeship programs outside of the building and construction trades under the DAS from evaluating fire camp program graduates for admission with advanced standing based on prior coursework and work experience

## **Background**

*Pre-apprenticeships.* The Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) within the Department of Industrial Relations administers the state's apprenticeship laws and enforces apprenticeship standards for wages, hours, working conditions, and the specific skills required for state certification as a journey person in an apprenticeable occupation. In general, apprenticeship programs provide instruction that combines a formal course of in-class instruction with practical "on-the-job" training.

Pre-apprenticeship programs are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in registered apprenticeship programs. These programs have a documented partnership with at least one registered apprenticeship program sponsor and together, they expand the participant's career pathway opportunities with industry-based training coupled with classroom instruction.

The Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) is a pre-apprenticeship training program that was developed in 2007 by North America's Building Trades Union. It was designed to identify common elements in all building and construction trades' apprenticeship programs and combine them into one curriculum encompassing 120 hours of training. Among other things, the curriculum includes general orientation to apprenticeships, an introduction to the construction industry, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid, an Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10-hour certification course, applied mathematics for construction, and blueprint reading.

*In-Prison Job Training.* Many studies have examined the relationship between employment and recidivism. Although the formerly incarcerated face many barriers to obtaining employment, good quality employment is correlated with lower rates of recidivism. Given this correlation, California has invested in various types of in-prison job training programs in order to improve job prospects for the incarcerated population upon release.

In 2018, the Legislature established the Pre-Release Construction Trades Certification Program, administered by CDCR, to increase employment opportunities in the construction trades for incarcerated individuals after release. The program is overseen by a joint advisory committee, composed of representatives from building and construction trades employee organizations, the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, joint apprenticeship training programs, Cal PIA, the DAS, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and any other representatives the department determines appropriate.

*Conservation (Fire) Camps.* CDCR, in cooperation with Cal Fire and the Los Angeles County Fire Department, jointly operates 35 conservation camps, commonly referred to as fire camps, in 25 counties across the state. Fire camp participants support state, local and federal government agencies as they respond to emergencies such as fires, floods, and other natural or manmade disasters, and complete community service projects when not assigned to an emergency. All fire camps are minimum-security facilities which are overseen by CDCR employees. Participants are supervised by Cal Fire staff when responding to a wildfire or working on a conservation project.

Incarcerated individuals participating in fire camps receive the same entry-level training as Cal Fire's seasonal firefighters as well as ongoing training from Cal Fire throughout their time in the program. An incarcerated person must volunteer

for the fire camp program, and some individuals are ineligible for fire camp assignment based on their convictions, including convictions for sex offenses, arson, and escape with force or violence. Individuals who volunteer for fire camp must complete Cal Fire's Firefighting Training Program, and program participants become certified wildland firefighters after completing this training.

*Reentry Programs.* The State has also invested in reentry work training programs. As part of California's efforts to increase rehabilitative opportunities and reduce recidivism, CWDB, CDCR, Cal PIA, and California Workforce Association created the Corrections-Workforce Partnership in 2017. This partnership links education, job training, and work experience in prison to post-release jobs by fostering a system of coordinated service delivery to a population that faces a variety of barriers.

In 2018, the Legislature appropriated \$37 million for the Prison to Employment Initiative (P2E), which is administered by the CWDB. The mission of P2E is to create a pathway toward employment and away from recidivism for formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals. P2E funds the integration of workforce and reentry services through grants to workforce service providers across California, including both direct services and supportive services, paving a pathway towards employment and away from recidivism for the formerly incarcerated and justice-involved population.

This bill seeks to build upon prior efforts to provide career options to fire camp participants following their release from incarceration.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**      Appropriation:      No      Fiscal Com.:Yes      Local:No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

CDCR would incur significant annual costs for additional workload associated with program development and expansion, interdepartmental coordination and the validation and tracking of training skills and competencies.

CalFire and DIR would likely incur minor costs to participate with the joint advisory committee to facilitate the admission of graduates of the program into apprenticeship programs.

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 5/14/26)

Laborers' International Union of North America, California State Council of

Laborers (co-source)

NextGen Policy (co-source)

ACLU California Action

Associated General Contractors, California Chapters

California Federation of Labor Unions, AFL-CIO

California Public Defenders Association

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 5/14/26)

None received

Prepared by: Stephanie Jordan / PUB. S. /

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