

financial burdens faced by parolees as a result of the mandatory conditions of their parole. This could result in lower reincarceration rates due to technical parole violations among parolees.

In April 2011 Colorado implemented the Colorado Violation Decision Making Process (CVDMP). The idea was to standardize practices and punishments regarding parole violations. A pilot study of the process was conducted from November 8, 2010 till February 4, 2011 where CPOs would submit violations using CVDMP paperwork.¹

The results of the CVDMP pilot study were published in December 2011. A total of 2,277 parole violations² were reported over the pilot study period. Of these at least 1,242 (54%) relate to the mandatory conditions that this bill affects. For example of the 2,277 violations, 507 violations were from missed drug/alcohol tests.

Passing this bill would allow CPOs to decide if drug/alcohol testing would be needed for their parolee. The result of this would be fewer technical parole violations and possibly lower re-incarceration rates among parolees. According to the Colorado Legislative Council imposing fewer conditions on CPOs may reduce their overall workload. There would be less administrative work to be done per parolee. If imposing fewer conditions leads to fewer technical violations the Council believes that the caseload for the Parole Board will fall as well.³

There are a total of 10,485 parolees in Colorado.⁴ Parolees are subject to urinalysis (UAs) as part of their parole, with the frequency dependent on the conditions of their parole. Each UA costs the State approximately \$8.98 per test.

UAs would reduce cost to the state. A parolee who is returned to prison due to parole violation(s) appears to spent 6 months in custody, costing the state \$10,950 per offender. ⁶

Parolees are required, at their own expense, to submit to random chemical testing of a biological substance sample from the parolee to determine the presence of drugs or alcohol. Hair follicle testing averages from \$105-\$125 per test. Should the parolee's CPO determine that such tests were unnecessary this money could be spent on other aspects of their life, increasing their utility.

However, there exist hazards to the public from lowering parole requirements. The Parole Board and CPOs cannot examine every case correctly. Parolees who should be under stricter supervision may be granted exemptions under this law. This puts the public at potentially increased risk as a result of this bill, which would increase costs that the State and society bear.

Law enforcement officials such as Larimer County Sheriff Justin Smith are worried that the Department of Corrections is reducing rates of re-incarceration of parole violators due to budgetary constraints rather than public safety. To quote Sheriff Smith ""The drive is...to declare success when people don't go back, but the number one [drive] should be public safety. It comes down to community safety. That needs to be the goal. Let's be wise on what we're doing to save dollars. In the end, if it saves money but doesn't protect the public, it's a failure." ⁷

It should also be noted workload for the Parole Board and CPOs will increase in another form. Each parolee's case will have to be individually considered as to whether or not there should be additional requirements placed on them. This will increase administrative costs on the

⁶ "Fiscal Note HB17-1308." Colorado Legislative Council Staff. Apr 13, 2017.

⁷ Phillips, Noelle. "Colorado has reduced its prison population, but at what cost to the public safety?". *The Denver Post*. Mar 19, 2016

Parole Board and CPOs. If under the new guidelines parolees end up re-offending more often as a result of less supervision the Parole Board and CPOs will face additional costs.

Removing these requirements at once to all future parolees poses an unnecessary risk to public safety. It may also jeopardize the progress made by parolees in their effort to reintegrate into society. With less supervision more responsibility is placed on the parolee. Not all parolees may be ready for that responsibility.

These concerns may be addressed if the bill was put into place slowly. The bill could be rewritten so that it initially applies only to parolees considered to be low risk to the public. This