WEST virginia legislature

2021 regular session

ENROLLED

Committee Substitute

for

House Bill 2747

By Delegates Fast, Criss, D. Kelly, Reynolds, Hott, Westfall and Toney

[Passed April 10, 2021; in effect ninety days from passage.]

AN ACT to amend and reenact §15A-9-1 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931 as amended, and to amend and reenact §62-12-12 of said code, all relating to offices and officers in the Department of Homeland Security generally; clarifying duties and qualifications of the Chief Hearing Examiner of the Department of Homeland Security; removing language dictating residence requirements of Parole Board members based on congressional districts; clarifying that substitute Parole Board members serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor; directing that a least three board members initially appointed after July 1, 2021, have at least five years experience in social work, mental health, or prisoner reentry; exempting Parole Board meetings from open meeting law and clarifying that parole hearings are open to the public.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**CHAPTER 15A. Department of Military Affairs and Public**

**Safety.**

ARTICLE 9. OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS.

§15A-9-1. Office created; appointment of Chief Hearing Examiner.

(a) The Office of Administrative Hearings is created as a separate operating agency within the department.

(b) The secretary shall appoint a director of the office who serves as the administrative head of the office and as Chief Hearing Examiner.

(c) The Chief Hearing Examiner shall be a citizen of the United States and a resident of this state who is admitted to the practice of law in this state.

(d) The salary of the Chief Hearing Examiner shall be set by the secretary of the department.

(e) In addition to adherence to the code of conduct set forth in §6B-2-5a of this code, the Chief Hearing Examiner during his or her term shall:

(1) Not engage directly or indirectly in any activity, occupation, or business interfering or inconsistent with his or her duties as Chief Hearing Examiner;

(2) Not hold any other appointed public office or any elected public office or any other position of public trust; and

(3) Not be a candidate for any elected public office, or serve on or under any committee of, any political party.

(f) The Chief Hearing Examiner serves at the will and pleasure of the secretary.

**CHAPTER 62. CRIMINAL PROCEDURE.**

**ARTICLE 12. PROBATION AND PAROLE.**

**§62-12-12. Parole Board generally.**

(a) The West Virginia Parole Board is continued as part of the Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The board shall consist of nine members, each of whom shall have been a resident of this state for at least five consecutive years prior to his or her appointment. No more than five of the board members may at any one time belong to the same political party, except as provided in subsection (b) of this section. The board shall be appointed by the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor.

(b) The Governor shall appoint one of the nine members to serve as chairperson at the Governor’s will and pleasure. In addition to all other powers, duties, and responsibilities granted and assigned to the chairperson by law and rule, the chairperson has the following powers and duties:

(1) To provide for the management of facilities and personnel of the board;

(2) To supervise the administration and operation of the board;

(3) To delegate the powers and duties of his or her office to the vice chairperson or other members of the board, who shall act under the direction of the chairperson and for whose acts he or she is responsible: *Provided*, That if the position of chairperson becomes vacant by death, resignation, or otherwise, the vice chairperson shall assume all the powers and duties of the chairperson until such time as a new chairperson is appointed pursuant to the provisions of this subsection;

(4) To employ one full-time administrative employee, who shall be a classified exempt; and

(5) To exercise all other powers and perform all other duties necessary and proper in carrying out his or her responsibilities as chairperson.

(c) The board, from its membership, shall elect a vice chairperson, at least once every year, to serve as chair in the absence of a chairperson. In the absence of or at the direction of the chairperson, the vice chairperson may exercise the powers and duties of the chairperson. The vice chairperson shall, while performing the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson, have all of the statutorily authorized power and duties of the chairperson.

(d) Members of the board shall have at least an undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university or at least five years of actual experience in the fields of corrections, law enforcement, sociology, law, education, psychology, social work, or medicine, or a combination thereof, and shall be otherwise competent to perform the duties of his or her office: *Provided,* That at least three members initially appointed after July 1, 2021, shall have five or more years experience in the fields of mental health, social work, or inmate reentry services. All members currently serving on the board shall continue the terms they are currently serving, unless otherwise removed. The members shall be appointed for overlapping terms of six years. Members are eligible for reappointment. The members of the board shall devote their full time and attention to their board duties.

(e) The Governor may, if he or she is informed that a vacancy is imminent, appoint a member to fill the imminent vacancy prior to it becoming vacant: *Provided,* That the new member may be appointed no more than 30 days prior to the vacancy occurring and only for purposes of training. He or she may not assume the powers and duties of the position until the vacancy has actually occurred.

(f) The Governor may appoint no more than five persons to a list of substitute board members. Substitute board members shall meet the qualifications set forth in subsection (d) of this section. The persons on the list shall be used in a rotating fashion. If a full-time board member is unable to serve, a substitute board member may serve in his or her place. These substitute board members shall have the same powers and duties of the fulltime board members while acting as a substitute and shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor. These members shall be reimbursed for expenses and paid a per diem rate set by the secretary.

(g) The Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation shall provide administrative and other services to the board as the board requires. Expenses of the board shall be included within the annual budget of the Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation: *Provided*, That the salaries of the members appointed pursuant to subsection (b) of this section are to be included in a separate budget for the Parole Board.

(h) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, meetings of the parole board are not subject to the provisions of §6-9A-1 *et seq.* of this code: *Provided*, That hearings before the parole board shall be open to the public.

The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

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*Chairman, House Committee*

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*Chairman, Senate Committee*

Originating in the House.

In effect ninety days from passage.

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*Clerk of the House of Delegates*

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*Clerk of the Senate*

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*Speaker of the House of Delegates*

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*President of the Senate*

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The within ................................................... this the...........................................

day of ..........................................................................................................., 2021.

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*Governor*