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Position on House Bill 2931

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Position on House Bill 2931

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House Bill 2391:

“The purpose of this bill is to train inmates as arborists and use them to inspect trees along state roads and highways for those in danger of falling onto the roads and highways.”

Personal Perspective:

This bill suggests that care for the environment will be taught and enforced, citizens will be subjected to a safer roadway to drive on, and inmates will be learning valuable skills that keep them occupied in their incarceration in a humane and educational way.

Environmental Protection

- will help keep the overgrowth / damage towards the environment, specifically in order and ensure their care
- help keep ecosystems stable and preserve homes animals have made within trees
- Enforce / give recognition to environmental protection, making it a bigger presence throughout the state by teaching people about arboriculture

Safety of Citizens

- enforces the safety of citizens by eliminating debris (like tree branches or even fallen trees) and reduces the risk of car crashes, protecting citizens from unnecessary harm
- Visitors from other states who merge onto state roads from the interstate will also be further protected

Prison Reformation

- facilitate a more humane / educational environment for those incarcerated in prison systems
- Teaching a topic to be actively be involved in keeps mind stimulated, evokes care / passion for those who experience little, and gives chance for more independence / teamwork amongst inmates
- introduce reformation and structure in the form of learning into their lives

Evidence

Multiple environmental protection companies work to protect 608 million to 610 million acres of federal land, and West Virginia being a responsible sector of that force needs to ensure that it is giving proper attention to forestry (“Environmental Policy in West Virginia” p. 1).

Evidence

Trees are known to be “the most commonly struck item in roadways that lead to car crashes” (Mitigation Strategies For Design Exceptions – Safety p. 1)

Evidence

In a journal entry by the ACLU, it says that “far too many prisoners are held in conditions that threaten their health, safety, and human dignity on a daily basis” (Prisoner’s Rights. p.1),

Recommendations (Policy/Education)

This policy should become a teachable class within prison systems in a classroom setting, that way the formal education of arboriculture can fully be taught, and become optional after a certain amount of time for prisoners to take part in to ensure dedication to the topic of environmental protection for those who are truly interested. It would also be beneficial to offer this as an optional resource for rehabilitation centers, seeing as making a positive environmental change could reform and inspire others struggling in the same way inmates do.

Resources

- “Environmental Policy in West Virginia.” Ballotpedia, ballotpedia.org/Environmental_policy_in_West_Virginia#_Land.
- Mitigation Strategies For Design Exceptions - Safety | Federal Highway Administration, safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway_dept/countermeasures/safe_recovery/clear_zones/fhwasa0612/.
- “Prisoners’ Rights.” American Civil Liberties Union, www.aclu.org/issues/prisoners-rights.