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**HOUSE BILL 1543**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Dye and Kretz

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a wild horse holding and training  
2 program at Coyote Ridge corrections center; and creating new  
3 sections.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature is committed to helping  
6 incarcerated persons successfully rejoin society after their release.  
7 In Washington, correctional industries is an important stepping stone  
8 for incarcerated persons to transition from a life behind bars to a  
9 free, law-abiding, and productive life in the community. These  
10 vocational and occupational programs are proven to promote  
11 rehabilitation and redemption, reduce recidivism, and improve public  
12 safety. The legislature intends to develop strategies for expanding  
13 these programs offered to incarcerated persons. To that end,  
14 correctional industries is hereby directed to evaluate the wild horse  
15 training and holding program in Arizona, which is conducted in  
16 partnership with Arizona correctional industries and the federal  
17 bureau of land management, for the purpose of implementing a similar  
18 program in Washington. Participants in the Arizona program have  
19 successfully and skillfully cared for and trained wild horses, which  
20 were then adopted or purchased by the public through the bureau of  
21 land management wild horse and burro program. Program participants

1 use gentling techniques based in natural horsemanship and gain  
2 equestrian skills they can use when seeking employment or building  
3 businesses after being released. In the process, participants also  
4 build self-confidence and learn the value of patience, warmth, and  
5 respect for all living things. Early research indicates that  
6 participants in the Arizona program have significantly lower  
7 recidivism rates than the rest of the prison population, less than 15  
8 percent as compared to 40 percent. The legislature recognizes the  
9 Arizona program as a potential model for developing a similar program  
10 at the Coyote Ridge correctional center.

11 Further, establishing a similar training and holding program  
12 would create an opportunity to address the statewide shortage of  
13 farriers resulting from the closure of the farrier program at Walla  
14 Walla Community College. A partnership between Walla Walla Community  
15 College and correctional industries would assist with meeting the  
16 demand for farrier services while also creating even more employment  
17 opportunities for persons leaving correctional institutions.

18 Therefore, the legislature hereby directs correctional industries  
19 to conduct a feasibility study and develop an implementation plan for  
20 the purpose of establishing a wild horse training, holding, and  
21 farrier program at Coyote Ridge corrections center.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of corrections, through  
23 correctional industries, shall conduct a feasibility study and  
24 develop a plan for implementing a wild horse training, holding, and  
25 farrier program at the Coyote Ridge corrections center. The program  
26 must be designed in partnership with the federal bureau of land  
27 management wild horse and burro program, for the purpose of assisting  
28 incarcerated persons with developing occupational, vocational, and  
29 life skills.

30 (2) In conducting the study and developing an implementation  
31 plan, the department shall consult with the bureau of land management  
32 wild horse and burro program, the state department of natural  
33 resources, the state department of agriculture, Walla Walla Community  
34 College, Washington State University, other appropriate state and  
35 federal agencies, local governments, and experts in the field of wild  
36 horse management and training. The department must:

37 (a) Ensure the plan will use natural horsemanship as a basis for  
38 gentling and training;

1 (b) Evaluate and consult with similar programs in other states,  
2 including reviewing existing agreements with the bureau of land  
3 management and studying operations and facilities used by those  
4 programs;

5 (c) Develop design and construction options for holding and  
6 training program facilities, which must include a consideration of:  
7 (i) The safety and welfare of incarcerated persons and staff; (ii)  
8 maintaining appropriate levels of security for a correctional  
9 institution; (iii) the welfare of the horses and the facilities  
10 necessary to support the proposed number of horses; and (iv) sourcing  
11 cost-effective materials, including repurposing materials from  
12 existing facilities;

13 (d) Determine the costs of establishing and maintaining  
14 operations, facilities, and staff for a holding program to feed, care  
15 for, and restore bureau of land management horses and burros as well  
16 as for a training program, which must consider: Utilizing  
17 correctional industries for constructing, maintaining, and operating  
18 facilities; financial support from the bureau of land management for  
19 holding the horses; and leveraging other available federal funding;

20 (e) Evaluate the availability of land necessary to support the  
21 program, which must include an evaluation of: (i) Current state  
22 property and adjacent private or public property available for lease  
23 or acquisition to be used for hay production, with the goal of  
24 promoting agricultural and farming skills through the holding and  
25 training program; (ii) current state property and adjacent private or  
26 public property available for lease or acquisition to be used for  
27 training facilities and holding facilities; and (iii) the water  
28 necessary and available for operations, including well water and  
29 surface water sourced from the region;

30 (f) Evaluate the steps necessary to develop a partnership with  
31 Walla Walla Community College for the purpose of establishing a  
32 course for qualifying participants to obtain a farrier certificate to  
33 be completed in conjunction with the wild horse training program. The  
34 course may also include a business basics class or component to  
35 assist participants with managing their farrier careers following  
36 their release;

37 (g) Consult with Washington State University to determine whether  
38 the college of veterinary medicine may have students practice care at  
39 the training and holding facilities; and

1           (h) Assess any changes to state statutes or department policies  
2 necessary to implement the program.

3           (3) The department shall complete the study and submit a report  
4 and implementation plan to the governor and appropriate committees of  
5 the legislature no later than November 1, 2023.

--- **END** ---