First Regular Session Seventy-fourth General Assembly STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 23-0775.01 Jane Ritter x4342

HOUSE BILL 23-1214

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Epps, Weissman, Bacon, Garcia, Gonzales-Gutierrez, Mabrey, Woodrow

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

(None),

House Committees

Senate Committees

Judiciary

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES TO APPLY FOR COMMUTATION OF A CRIMINAL SENTENCE.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov.)

The bill formalizes and establishes details concerning the process for an incarcerated individual (applicant) to apply for a commutation of sentence. The process includes requiring the executive elemency representative to gather information from the district attorney who prosecuted the applicant's case and creating a list of factors that the governor and executive elemency board may consider when evaluating

the application and deciding whether the applicant's sentence should be commuted. The governor retains the ultimate decision-making authority whether to commute a sentence.

The bill permits the governor to grant pardons to a class of defendants who were convicted of the possession of up to 2 ounces of marijuana without complying with the commutation process.

The bill requires the governor's office to keep statistics on applications for commutation of sentence and post a report of the statistics annually on its website.

1 Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado: 2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **amend** article 17 of 3 title 16 as follows: 4 **16-17-101.** Governor may commute sentence. The governor is 5 hereby fully authorized, when he THE GOVERNOR deems it proper and 6 advisable and consistent with the public interests and the rights and 7 interests of the condemned, to commute the sentence in any case by 8 reducing the penalty in a capital case to IN A CASE WITH A SENTENCE OF 9 LIFE WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF PAROLE OR A CASE OF imprisonment for 10 life or for WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF PAROLE TO a term of not less than 11 twenty years at hard labor IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS. 12 **16-17-101.5. Definitions.** As used in this article 17, unless 13 THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES: 14 "APPLICANT" MEANS AN INCARCERATED PERSON OR AN 15 INCARCERATED PERSON'S LEGAL COUNSEL WHO SUBMITS A REQUEST OR AN 16 APPLICATION FOR COMMUTATION OF THE INCARCERATED PERSON'S 17 SENTENCE. THE APPLICANT MAY ALSO SUBMIT A REQUEST OR APPLICATION 18 FOR A PARDON. 19 "BOARD" MEANS THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY BOARD (2) 20 ESTABLISHED THROUGH EXECUTIVE ORDER, OR THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

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IF AN EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY BOARD DOES NOT	EXIST.
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- 2 (3) "DEPARTMENT" MEANS THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.
- 3 (4) "DEPARTMENT STAFF" INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, A
- 4 PERSON WHO IS EMPLOYED BY THE DEPARTMENT, VOLUNTEER, GROUP
- 5 FACILITATOR, CONTRACT WORKER, OR EDUCATOR PROVIDING SERVICES
- 6 WITHIN A DEPARTMENT FACILITY.

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- 7 (5) "EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE" MEANS AN 8 INDIVIDUAL APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE 9 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES SET FORTH IN THIS ARTICLE 17.
- 10 "SUPPORT LETTER" MEANS A LETTER INCLUDED IN AN 11 APPLICATION FOR COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE WRITTEN BY FAMILY, 12 FRIENDS, EMPLOYERS, DEPARTMENT STAFF, OR OTHERS THAT SHOWS THE 13 APPLICANT'S ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY; WORK ETHIC, PERSONAL 14 GROWTH, AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS; CONDUCT WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT; 15 ACTS OF HEROISM; OR OTHER SKILLS OR ATTRIBUTES OBSERVED BY THE 16 LETTER'S AUTHOR, WHICH MAY, BUT NEED NOT INCLUDE, A 17 RECOMMENDATION THAT THE APPLICANT BE GRANTED A COMMUTATION 18 OF SENTENCE.
 - 16-17-102. Procedure for application for commutation of sentence by the governor application materials certificate of conduct from department timeline for application responsibilities of the executive clemency representative. (1) After a conviction, all applications for commutation of sentence or pardon for crimes committed must be accompanied by a certificate of the respective superintendent of the correctional facility, showing the conduct of an applicant during the applicant's confinement in the correctional facility, together with such evidences of former good character as the applicant is able to produce.

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Before the governor approves such application, it must be first submitted to the present district attorney of the district in which the applicant was convicted and to the judge who sentenced and the attorney who prosecuted at the trial of the applicant, if available, for such comment as they may deem proper concerning the merits of the application, so as to provide the governor with information upon which to base the governor's action. The governor shall make reasonable efforts to locate the judge who sentenced and the attorney who prosecuted at the trial of the applicant and shall afford them a reasonable time, not less than fourteen days, to comment on such applications. The requirements of this section are deemed to have been met if the persons to whom the application is submitted for comment do not comment within fourteen days after their receipt of the application or within such other reasonable time in excess of fourteen days as specified by the governor, or if the sentencing judge or prosecuting attorney cannot be located, are incapacitated, or are otherwise unavailable for comment despite the good-faith efforts of the governor to obtain their comments. Good character previous to conviction, good conduct during confinement in the correctional facility, the statements of the sentencing judge and the district attorneys, if any, and any other material concerning the merits of the application must be given such weight as seems just and proper to the governor, in view of the circumstances of each particular case, with due regard for the reformation of the accused. The governor has sole discretion in evaluating said comments and in soliciting other comments the governor deems appropriate.

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(2) The governor may grant pardons to a class of defendants who were convicted of the possession of up to two ounces of marijuana. The

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1	requirements of subsection (1) of this section do not apply to defendants
2	who were convicted of the possession of up to two ounces of marijuana,
3	but the governor may make any inquiry as deemed appropriate to seek any
4	relevant information necessary from any person or agency to reach an
5	informed decision.
6	(1) THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE IS RESPONSIBLE
7	FOR PROCESSING AN APPLICATION THROUGH THE ENTIRE PROCESS. THE
8	EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE SHALL PRODUCE THE
9	APPLICATION, INCLUDING DESIGNING AND MAILING THE APPLICATION
10	CONSISTENT WITH LANGUAGE IN THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE ORDER
11	CREATING THE BOARD.
12	(2) FOR CONSIDERATION OF COMMUTATION OF AN APPLICANT'S
13	SENTENCE, THE APPLICANT SHALL REQUEST AN APPLICATION FROM THE
14	EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE OR LOCATE THE APPLICATION ON
15	THE GOVERNOR'S WEBSITE. IF THE APPLICATION IS REQUESTED BY MAIL,
16	THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE SHALL MAIL THE
17	APPLICATION FOR COMMUTATION TO THE APPLICANT WITHIN TEN BUSINESS
18	DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST.
19	(3) AFTER AN APPLICANT RECEIVES THE APPLICATION, THE
20	APPLICANT SHALL COMPLETE THE APPLICATION AND MAIL IT TO THE
21	EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE. THE APPLICATION MUST
22	CONTAIN SUPPORTING MATERIALS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:
23	(a) A PERSONAL LETTER FROM THE APPLICANT EXPLAINING WHY
24	A COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE IS WARRANTED;
25	(b) Plans for reentering the community;
26	(c) CERTIFICATIONS OF PROGRAMS COMPLETED AND A LISTING OF
27	ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND EDUCATIONAL MILESTONES ACHIEVED WHILE

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1	INCARCERATED;
2	(d) SUPPORT LETTERS FROM THE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING, BUT
3	NOT LIMITED TO, FAMILY, FRIENDS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, GOVERNMENT
4	OFFICIALS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS, PREVIOUS OR FUTURE EMPLOYERS, AND
5	DEPARTMENT STAFF; AND
6	(e) IF APPROPRIATE, A SUPPORT LETTER FROM THE VICTIM OF
7	VICTIM'S FAMILY MAY BE INCLUDED.
8	(4) THE APPLICANT MAY INCLUDE MULTIMEDIA COMPONENTS IN
9	THE APPLICATION.
10	(5) DEPARTMENT STAFF SHALL SUBMIT ANY SUPPORT LETTERS
11	DIRECTLY TO THE APPLICANT FOR INCLUSION IN THE FINAL APPLICATION
12	ANY DEPARTMENT STAFF MAY SUBMIT A SUPPORT LETTER ON BEHALF OF
13	AN APPLICANT. IF THE DEPARTMENT STAFF MEMBER CHOOSES TO DO SO
14	THE DEPARTMENT SHALL NOT PREVENT OR DISCOURAGE THE DEPARTMENT
15	STAFF MEMBER FROM SUBMITTING A SUPPORT LETTER.
16	(6) When an application is received by the executive
17	CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE, THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY
18	REPRESENTATIVE SHALL NOTIFY THE APPLICANT THAT THE APPLICATION
19	HAS BEEN RECEIVED AND IS COMPLETE. IF THE APPLICATION IS
20	INCOMPLETE, THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE SHALL INFORM
21	THE APPLICANT OF ANY MISSING MATERIALS. THE APPLICANT SHALI
22	SUBMIT THE MISSING MATERIAL WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE NOTICE
23	THAT THE APPLICATION IS MISSING MATERIALS.
24	(7) (a) AFTER AN APPLICATION FOR COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE
25	IS SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANT, THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY
26	REPRESENTATIVE SHALL REQUEST A CERTIFICATE OF CONDUCT FROM THE
2.7	SUPERINTENDENT OF THE APPLICANT'S CURRENT CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

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1	AND ANY OTHER CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES WHERE THE APPLICANT WAS
2	HOUSED. THE CERTIFICATE MUST INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE
3	APPLICANT'S CONDUCT DURING CONFINEMENT IN THE CORRECTIONAL
4	FACILITY. THE SUPERINTENDENT SHALL SUBMIT THE CERTIFICATE OF
5	CONDUCT TO THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE WITHIN SIXTY
6	DAYS AFTER THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE'S REQUEST. THE
7	CERTIFICATE MUST ALSO INCLUDE THE APPLICANT'S COLORADO
8	ACTUARIAL RISK ASSESSMENT SCALE (CARAS) SCORE, THE APPLICANT'S
9	COLORADO TRANSITIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN (CTAP), REPORTS OF
10	ANY DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS AGAINST THE APPLICANT, AND
11	PRESENTENCE INVESTIGATION REPORTS, DETAINER NOTIFICATIONS, OR
12	OTHER SIMILAR LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNICATIONS.
13	(b) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL, UPON REQUEST FROM THE
14	APPLICANT, UPDATE ANY RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT DETAILED IN THIS

(b) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL, UPON REQUEST FROM THE APPLICANT, UPDATE ANY RISK ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT DETAILED IN THIS SUBSECTION (7) WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE'S REQUEST FOR A CERTIFICATE OF CONDUCT PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (7).

- (8) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL SEND A COPY OF ALL DOCUMENTS COLLECTED FOR THE CERTIFICATE OF CONDUCT TO THE APPLICANT AND THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE.
- (9) AFTER THE APPLICANT RECEIVES THE DOCUMENTS REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (8) OF THIS SECTION, THE APPLICANT HAS SIXTY DAYS TO SUBMIT A RESPONSE TO ANY INFORMATION IN THE DOCUMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE BEFORE THE FINAL APPLICATION IS SENT TO THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY BOARD. IN THE EVENT THAT AN EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY BOARD DOES NOT EXIST, THE FINAL APPLICATION SHALL BE SENT TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR FINAL

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1	REVIEW.
2	(10) The executive clemency board may request an
3	INTERVIEW WITH THE APPLICANT. THE APPLICANT MAY ACCEPT OR DENY
4	THE INTERVIEW WITH THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY BOARD. IF THE
5	APPLICANT ACCEPTS THE INTERVIEW, THE APPLICANT MAY HAVE LEGAL
6	COUNSEL PRESENT THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW.
7	16-17-102.5. Pardons for convictions of marijuana possession.
8	THE GOVERNOR MAY GRANT PARDONS TO A CLASS OF DEFENDANTS WHO
9	WERE CONVICTED OF THE POSSESSION OF UP TO TWO OUNCES OF
10	MARIJUANA. THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS ARTICLE 17 DO NOT APPLY TO
11	DEFENDANTS WHO WERE CONVICTED OF THE POSSESSION OF UP TO TWO
12	OUNCES OF MARIJUANA, BUT THE GOVERNOR MAY MAKE ANY INQUIRY AS
13	DEEMED APPROPRIATE TO SEEK ANY RELEVANT INFORMATION NECESSARY
14	FROM ANY PERSON OR AGENCY TO REACH AN INFORMED DECISION
15	REGARDING SUCH PERSONS.
16	16-17-103. Effect of pardon and commutation of sentence -
17	definitions. (1) A pardon issued by the governor shall waive WAIVES all
18	collateral consequences associated with each conviction for which the
19	person received a pardon unless the pardon limits the scope of the pardon
20	regarding collateral consequences.
21	(2) If the governor grants a pardon or a request for commutation
22	of sentence, the governor shall provide a copy of the pardon or
23	commutation of sentence to the Colorado bureau of investigation, and the
24	Colorado bureau of investigation shall note in the individual's record in
25	the Colorado crime information center that a pardon was issued or
26	commutation of sentence was granted.
27	(3) For purposes of this section, "collateral consequences" means

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1 a penalty, prohibition, bar, disadvantage, or disqualification, however 2 denominated, imposed on an individual as a result of the individual's 3 conviction of an offense, which penalty, prohibition, bar, or disadvantage 4 applies by operation of law regardless of whether the penalty, prohibition, 5 bar, or disadvantage is included in the judgment or sentence. "Collateral 6 consequences" does not include imprisonment, probation, parole, 7 supervised release, forfeiture, restitution, fine, assessment, or costs of 8 prosecution. 9 16-17-104. District attorney responsibility - submission of 10 response and materials - applicant response - notification to victim. 11 BEFORE THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY BOARD REVIEWS AN (1) (a) 12 APPLICATION FOR COMMUTATION, BUT AFTER THE APPLICANT HAS HAD 13 THE OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND TO ANY DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY THE 14 DEPARTMENT, THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE SHALL 15 FORWARD THE APPLICATION, TOGETHER WITH ANY SUPPORTING 16 MATERIALS, INCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE AND THE 17 APPLICANT'S RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE, TO THE DISTRICT 18 ATTORNEY WHO PROSECUTED THE CASE, OR THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S 19 SUCCESSOR IN OFFICE, WITHIN TEN DAYS AFTER THE APPLICANT'S FINAL 20 RESPONSE TO THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE. 21 (b) THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY SHALL NOTIFY THE VICTIM AND THE 22 VICTIM'S FAMILY, IF APPLICABLE, OF THE APPLICANT'S REQUEST FOR A 23 COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE WITHIN FOURTEEN DAYS AFTER THE RECEIPT 24 OF THE APPLICATION FROM THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE. 25 (2) (a) WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE APPLICATION 26 AND ALL SUPPORTING MATERIALS, THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY WHO

PROSECUTED THE CASE, OR THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S SUCCESSOR IN

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1	OFFICE, MAY SUBMIT, IN WRITING, THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S POSITION ON
2	THE APPLICATION TO THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE.
3	(b) If the district attorney submits a response within
4	THIRTY DAYS, THE EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE SHALL
5	FORWARD A COPY OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S RESPONSE TO THE
6	APPLICANT. THE APPLICANT HAS THIRTY DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE
7	DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S RESPONSE TO REPLY DIRECTLY TO THE EXECUTIVE
8	CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE REGARDING ANY OF THE INFORMATION
9	SUBMITTED BY THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (2)(a)
10	OF THIS SECTION.
11	(c) (I) IF, AFTER THE THIRTY-DAY DEADLINE FOR THE RECEIPT OF
12	A RESPONSE FROM THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY HAS PASSED AND NO INPUT
13	HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY, THE EXECUTIVE
14	CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE SHALL SUBMIT THE APPLICATION TO THE
15	EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY BOARD. IN THE EVENT THAT AN EXECUTIVE
16	CLEMENCY BOARD DOES NOT EXIST, THE FINAL APPLICATION SHALL BE
17	SENT TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR FINAL REVIEW.
18	(II) IF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY SUBMITS A RESPONSE, THE
19	EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY REPRESENTATIVE SHALL, THIRTY DAYS AFTER
20	FORWARDING THE RESPONSE TO THE APPLICANT PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION
21	(2)(b) of this section, submit the application, including the
22	DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S RESPONSE AND ANY APPLICANT'S RESPONSE, TO THE
23	EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY BOARD. IN THE EVENT THAT AN EXECUTIVE
24	CLEMENCY BOARD DOES NOT EXIST, THE FINAL APPLICATION SHALL BE
25	SENT TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR FINAL REVIEW.
26	16-17-105. Factors for consideration by executive clemency
27	board and governor in evaluating an application for commutation of

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1	sentence. (1) IN EVALUATING AND DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF AN
2	APPLICATION FOR COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE, THE BOARD AND THE
3	GOVERNOR MAY CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FACTORS RELATED TO THE
4	APPLICANT:
5	(a) GOOD CHARACTER PREVIOUS TO CONVICTION;
6	(b) GOOD CONDUCT DURING CONFINEMENT;
7	$(c) \ Statements \ and \ supporting \ materials \ from \ the \ district$
8	ATTORNEY, IF ANY; AND
9	(d) ANY OTHER MATERIAL CONCERNING THE MERITS OF THE
10	APPLICATION.
11	(2) THE GOVERNOR AND THE BOARD SHALL GIVE THE FACTORS
12	DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION SUCH WEIGHT AS IS JUST
13	AND PROPER, IN VIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF EACH PARTICULAR CASE,
14	WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE REHABILITATION OF THE APPLICANT.
15	(3) AN APPLICANT WHO CLAIMS INNOCENCE IS NOT REQUIRED TO
16	ADMIT GUILT OR SHOW REMORSE FOR OFFENSES CONVICTED OF IN ORDER
17	TO BE CONSIDERED FOR A COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE.
18	(4) The governor and the board may make special
19	CONSIDERATION FOR APPLICANTS WHO ARE VETERANS OF THE UNITED
20	STATES ARMED FORCES AND FOR APPLICANTS CONVICTED OF CRIMES FOR
21	WHICH PENALTIES HAVE BEEN DECREASED SINCE THE APPLICANT'S
22	CONVICTION.
23	(5) The governor has sole discretion in evaluating
24	COMMENTS CONTAINED IN THE APPLICATION AND IN SOLICITING OTHER
25	COMMENTS AS THE GOVERNOR DEEMS APPROPRIATE.
26	16-17-106. Reporting. (1) The Governor's office shall
27	ANNUALLY AND ANONYMOUSLY REPORT THE FOLLOWING DATA RELATED

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1	TO APPLICATIONS FOR COMMUTATION OF SENTENCE ON THE GOVERNOR'S
2	WEBSITE:
3	(a) THE DATE THE APPLICATION FOR COMMUTATION WAS
4	SUBMITTED;
5	(b) IF THE APPLICATION WAS A NEW APPLICATION OR ROLLED OVER
6	FROM THE PRIOR YEAR;
7	(c) AGE OF THE APPLICANTS WHEN THE APPLICATION WAS
8	SUBMITTED;
9	(d) RACE, ETHNICITY, AND GENDER IDENTITY OF THE APPLICANTS;
10	(e) Whether any applicants were persons with a disability;
11	(f) APPLICANTS' AGE WHEN INCARCERATED ON THE CURRENT
12	CHARGE;
13	(g) LENGTH OF INCARCERATION WHEN THE APPLICATION WAS
14	SUBMITTED;
15	(h) NUMBER OF APPLICANTS REPRESENTED BY AN ATTORNEY;
16	(i) The recommendations of the executive clemency board;
17	AND
18	(j) THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS DENIED, APPROVED, OR
19	PENDING.
20	SECTION 2. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds,
21	determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
22	preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.

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