A bill to be entitled
An act relating to inmate reentry; amending s. 944.704, F.S.; authorizing the Department of Corrections to increase the number of employees serving as transition specialists and employment specialists; requiring transition assistance staff to provide job assignment credentialing and industry certification information to inmates before release; amending s. 944.705, F.S.; requiring the department to establish a telephone hotline for the benefit of released offenders; requiring the department to provide a comprehensive community reentry resource directory to inmates before release; requiring the department to use geographic forecasting data to notify inmates about reentry resources before release; requiring the department to allow certain organizations to apply to be registered to provide inmate reentry services; requiring the department to adopt policies for screening, approving, and registering such organizations authorizing contracting with public or private educational institutions to assist military veteran inmates in applying for certain benefits; authorizing contracting with public or private organizations to establish transitional employment programs that provide employment
opportunities to recently released inmates; requiring rulemaking; amending s. 944.801, F.S.; authorizing the department to expand the use of job assignment credentialing and industry certifications; requiring the department to develop a prison entrepreneurship program and adopt procedures for inmate admission; specifying requirements for the program; requiring the department to enter into agreements with certain entities to carry out duties associated with the program; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 944.704, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

944.704 Staff who provide transition assistance; duties.—
(1) The department shall provide a transition assistance specialist at each of the major institutions.
(2) The department may increase the number of transition assistance specialists in proportion to the number of inmates served at each of the major institutions and may increase the number of employment specialists per judicial circuit based on the number of released inmates served under community supervision in that circuit, subject to appropriations.
(3) The transition assistance specialists' whose duties
include, but are not limited to:

(a)(1) Coordinating delivery of transition assistance program services at the institution and at the community correctional centers authorized pursuant to s. 945.091(1)(b).

(b)(2) Assisting in the development of each inmate's postrelease plan.

(c)(3) Obtaining job placement information. Such information must include identifying any job assignment credentialing or industry certifications for which the inmate is eligible.

(d)(4) Providing a written medical discharge plan and referral to a county health department.

(e)(5) For an inmate who is known to be HIV positive, providing a 30-day supply of all HIV/AIDS-related medication that the inmate is taking before prior to release, if required under protocols of the Department of Corrections and treatment guidelines of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

(f)(6) Facilitating placement in a private transition housing program, if requested by any eligible inmate. If an inmate who is nearing his or her date of release requests placement in a contracted substance abuse transition housing program, the transition assistance specialist shall inform the inmate of program availability and assess the inmate's need and suitability for transition housing assistance. If an inmate is
approved for placement, the specialist shall assist the inmate and coordinate the release of the inmate with the selected program. If an inmate requests and is approved for placement in a contracted faith-based substance abuse transition housing program, the specialist must consult with the chaplain before prior to such placement. In selecting inmates who are nearing their date of release for placement in a faith-based program, the department shall ensure that an inmate's faith orientation, or lack thereof, will not be considered in determining admission to the program and that the program does not attempt to convert an inmate toward a particular faith or religious preference.

(g)(7) Providing a photo identification card to all inmates prior to their release.

(4) The transition assistance specialist may not be a correctional officer or correctional probation officer as defined in s. 943.10.

Section 2. Subsections (3) through (6) of section 944.705, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (4), (5), (6), and (11), respectively, and new subsections (3), (7), (8), (9), (10), and (12) are added to that section, to read:

944.705 Release orientation program.—

(3)(a) The department shall establish a toll-free hotline for the benefit of released inmates. The hotline shall provide information to released inmates seeking to obtain post-release referrals for community based reentry services.
(b) Before an inmate's release, the department shall provide the inmate with a comprehensive community reentry resource directory, which shall be organized by county and include the name, address, telephone number, and a description of the services offered by each reentry service provider. The directory shall also include the name, address, and telephone number of existing portals of entry and the toll-free hotline number required by paragraph (a).

(c) The department shall expand the use of the Glacier geographic forecasting system to provide inmates with community-specific reentry service provider referrals before release.

(7) A nonprofit faith-based, business and professional, civic, or community organization may apply for registration with the department to provide inmate reentry services. Reentry services include, but are not limited to, counseling; providing information on housing and job placement; money management assistance; and programs addressing substance abuse, mental health, or co-occurring conditions.

(8) The department shall adopt policies and procedures for screening, approving, and registering an organization that applies to provide inmate reentry services under subsection (7). The department may deny approval and registration of an organization or a representative from an organization if it determines that the organization or representative does not meet the requirements of the department's policies and procedures.
(9) The department may contract with a public or private educational institution's Veterans Advocacy Clinic or Veterans Legal Clinic to assist qualified veteran inmates in applying for veteran's benefits upon release.

(10) The department is authorized to contract with public or private organizations to establish transitional employment programs that provide employment opportunities for released inmates.

(12) The department shall adopt rules to implement this section.

Section 3. Subsections (4) through (6) of section 944.801, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (6) through (8), respectively, and new subsections (4) and (5) are added to that section, to read:

944.801 Education for state prisoners.—

(4) The department is authorized to expand the use of job assignment credentialing and industry certifications.

(5) The Correctional Education Program may establish a prison entrepreneurship program and adopt procedures for admitting student inmates. If the department elects to develop the program, it must include at least 180 days of in-prison education. Program curriculum must include a component on developing a business plan, procedures for graduation and certification of successful student inmates, and at least 90 days of transitional and postrelease continuing education.
services. Transitional and postrelease continuing education services may be offered to program graduates on a voluntary basis and shall not be a requirement for completion of the program. The department shall enter into agreements with public or private colleges, universities, or other non-profit entities to implement the program. The program shall be funded within existing resources.

Section 4. This act shall take effect October 1, 2019.