

[2015 Session] Fund Front-End Agency Operations that Support Research-Based Practices and Prioritize the Safety and Security of Youth

Policy Background:

The vision for Texas' juvenile justice system is to achieve successful outcomes for youth through a cohesive, comprehensive, front-end agency that keeps kids close to home and in their communities.

As such, Texas policy-makers should support the Texas Juvenile Justice Department's efforts to increase funding for community programs, which leverage local resources and are more conducive than secure facilities to youth rehabilitation. As the agency moves forward in becoming a true front-end agency, it is imperative to provide support to counties with the intent of achieving specific outcomes (e.g., positive youth development, stronger families, and healthier communities).

Policy-makers should also support funding for increased staffing of juvenile correctional officers to meet best practices and Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) requirements; the expansion of staff training across all levels of the juvenile justice system; the enhancement of educational instructions and services for youth; the expansion of probation programs and services that work; and increased support to the Office of Inspector General. Furthermore, policy-makers should appropriate additional funds to the Office of the Independent Ombudsman. It is critical that both funding and protections follow youth to their communities.

Relevant Bills:

- **Bill Number:** [HB 1](#) (author: Otto | sponsor: Nelson)
Bill Caption: General Appropriations Bill.
TCJE Materials: [Testimony on House Budget Recommendations regarding the Texas Juvenile Justice Department](#)
Hearing Notice: House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Articles I, IV & V, [Notice of Public Hearing on February 19, 2015](#)
Archived Hearing Video: House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on

Articles I, IV & V, [02/19/15 Video](#) [TCJE testimony begins at 04:59:00]

Outcome: **Effective 9/1/15**

- **Bill Number:** [SB 2](#) (Nelson)

Bill Caption: General Appropriations Bill.

TCJE Materials: [Testimony on Article V regarding the Texas Juvenile Justice Department](#)

Hearing Notice: Senate Finance Committee, [Notice of Public Hearing on February 23, 2015](#)

Archived Hearing Video: Senate Finance Committee, [02/26/15 Video](#) [TCJE testimony begins at 04:56:22]

Other TCJE Materials:

- [TCJE's Response](#) to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department's *Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017*

Outside Publications:

- Texas Juvenile Justice Department, [Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017](#)
- House Committee on Corrections, [Interim Report to the 84th Legislature](#) [January 2015]

See *Charge 1*: Study and review the correctional facilities and processes within Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, and Texas Juvenile Justice Department with emphasis on efficiencies, effectiveness, and recidivism. Examine the existing programmatic approach per facility in the areas of the vocation, education, visitation, rehabilitation, health and mental health services, parole supervision, and reentry initiatives. Evaluate opportunities for partnerships between facilities and private industries to offer education, job training, and potential employment for offenders during incarceration, parole, and final release. (pages 9-32)