

[2015 Session] Fund the Legislative Appropriations Request for the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles

Policy Background:

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles plays a critical role in protecting public safety in Texas by serving as the only entity that determines which individuals can be released on parole, which conditions of parole or mandatory supervision must be imposed, and which executive clemency recommendations should be made to the Governor.

Texas policy-makers should support budgetary items that cover operations costs, institutional parole officers, hearings, clemency determinations, and other costs. Likewise, policy-makers should support funding requests to update and upgrade parole guidelines.

Key Facts:

- TDCJ is requesting approximately \$6.3 billion over two years, not including exceptional items.

10.3% of the request will fund prison diversions through probation & community-based programs, as well as directing special needs offenders into treatment alternatives.

83.3% of the request will fund incarceration and indirect administration.

6.4% of the request will fund the Board of Pardons and Paroles and the operation of the parole system.^[1]

- According to TDCJ's Legislative Appropriations Request for 2016 and 2017, projections from the Legislative Budget Board indicate "a stable incarcerated population during the next biennium, slightly declining number of felony probationers under supervision compared to current levels, and a slight increase in the number of supervised parolees."^[2]
- As of August 2014, approximately 114,000 people were on parole in Texas, with nearly 88,000 on active supervision.^[3]

Relevant Bills:

- **Bill Number:** [HB 1](#) (author: Otto | sponsor: Nelson)
Bill Caption: General Appropriations Bill.
TCJE Materials: [Testimony on House Budget Recommendations](#) regarding the Board of Pardons and Paroles
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 04:40:00]
Outcome: **Effective 9/1/15**
- **Bill Number:** [SB 2](#) (Nelson)
Bill Caption: General Appropriations Bill.
TCJE Materials: [Testimony on Article V](#) regarding the Board of Pardons and Paroles
Hearing Notice: Senate Finance Committee, [Notice of Public Hearing on February 23, 2015](#)

Other TCJE Materials:

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

Outside Publications:

- Texas Department of Criminal Justice, [Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017](#)
- Legislative Budget Board, [Summary Tables for Legislative Budget Estimates \(House 2016-17 Biennium\)](#) – See Figure 1, Article V
- Legislative Budget Board, [Recommendations: House Version](#) – See Article V [V-5, page 595]
- Legislative Budget Board, [Recommendations: Senate Version](#) – See Article V [V-5, page 594]
- 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)

[1] Texas Department of Criminal Justice, *Legislative Appropriations Request for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017*, August 25, 2014.

[2] Ibid, p. ix.

[3] Texas Department of Criminal Justice, *Statistical Report: Fiscal Year 2014*, p. 4; http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/documents/Statistical_Report_FY2014.pdf