



Second Chance Victories in the Texas Legislature

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Second Chance Victories in the Texas Legislature: Overview

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- ◆ Next Steps in Reentry Policy
- ◆ Case Example: My Personal Journey

Building Partnerships

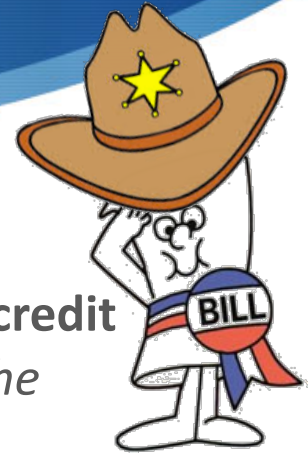
TCJC participates in a number of statewide coalitions, workgroups, and collaboratives to achieve the greatest impact:

- ◆ Smart-on-Crime Coalition
- ◆ Youth Justice Advocates Workgroup
- ◆ Mental Health/Substance Abuse/Criminal Justice Workgroup
- ◆ Prison Closures Coalition
- ◆ Statewide Reentry Conference Planning Committee



TCJC is also involved locally in the Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable and as a stakeholder with the City of Austin (Fair Chance Hiring ordinance)

Second Chance Victories in the 84th Session



HB 1546 (Allen), Relating to the award of diligent participation credit to defendants confined in a state jail felony facility. *(signed by the Governor, effective 9/1/15)*

HB 1546 requires judges who sentence an individual to serve time in state jail to make a finding whether that individual is eligible to earn early release credit for participating in educational, vocational, treatment, or work programs. If the judge makes the affirmative finding, the individual will automatically be eligible to have up to 20 percent of the full sentence deducted for successful program participation. If the judge does not make the affirmative finding, the judge will receive a report of the individual's program participation and make a decision at that time whether to grant early release.

TCJC Materials: [webpage and video](#), [CSHB 1546 fact sheet](#)

Second Chance Victories in the 84th Session



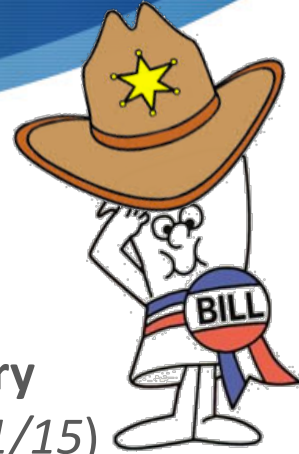
HB 943 (Thompson, Senfronia), Relating to the applicability of a wage and salary presumption to an incarcerated person for purposes of determining child support obligations. (*signed by the Governor, effective 9/1/15*)

HB 943 restores fairness to family court proceedings by removing the automatic presumption of earned income during incarceration. Doing so will keep child support arrears at a reasonable level, which will lessen a significant burden facing individuals released to the community, while also encouraging parents to reestablish relationships with children upon release.

TCJC Materials: [webpage and video](#), [HB 943 fact sheet](#)



Second Chance Victories in the 84th Session



[SB 578](#) (Hinojosa), Relating to providing inmates of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice with information regarding reentry and reintegration resources. *(signed by the Governor, effective 9/1/15)*

SB 578 requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to provide comprehensive, county-specific reentry resources to individuals being released from prison. This will enable returning individuals to formulate a tailored reentry plan that will increase their chances of success in the community.

TCJC Materials: [webpage and video](#), [SB 578 fact sheet](#)

Second Chance Victories in the 84th Session

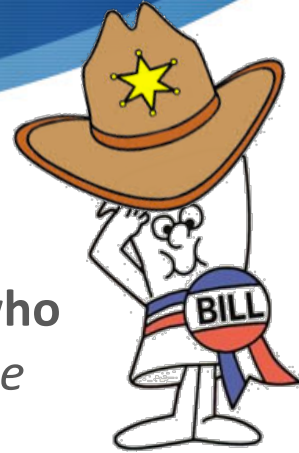


HB 549 (Johnson), Relating to certain duties of the Commission on Jail Standards regarding visitation periods for county jail prisoners. (*filed without the Governor's signature, effective 9/1/15*)

HB 549 codifies the current jail standard, which requires county jails to provide the opportunity for at least two face-to-face visits per week, rather than video-only visits; however, the bill does not apply to those counties that have incurred significant costs toward construction of facilities that allow for video-only visitation. In all other counties, this bill protects in-person visitation, a strong contributor to family reunification and success after release, and it prevents sheriffs from constructing facilities that do not accommodate in-person visitation.

TCJC Materials: [webpage and video](#), [HB 549 fact sheet](#)

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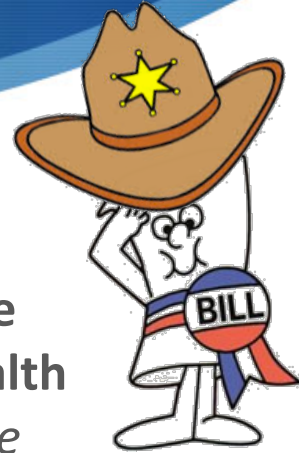


HB 1510 (Thompson, Senfronia), Relating to liability of persons who lease dwellings to persons with criminal records. *(filed without the Governor's signature, effective 1/1/16)*

HB 1510 protects landlords from the risk of lawsuits when they lease a dwelling to a tenant with a record that includes conviction, arrest, or deferred adjudication. This bill ensures that individuals with criminal records have access to stable housing, which is a critical factor in living successful, law-abiding lives in the community.

TCJC Materials: [webpage](#), [HB 1510 fact sheet](#)

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SB 200 (Nelson), Relating to the continuation and functions of the Health and Human Services Commission and the provision of health and human services in this state. (*signed by the Governor, effective 9/1/15*)

SB 200 amendment: **HB 1267** (Thompson, Senfronia) *Relating to the eligibility of certain persons for the supplemental nutrition assistance program. This amendment restores eligibility for SNAP to those who were barred from the program due to a drug felony conviction. Anyone who has eligibility restored under this bill will be locked out of the program for two years if he or she violates probation or parole terms, and the lifetime ban on SNAP will take hold if the person is convicted of a new offense.*

TCJC Materials: [webpage and video](#), [HB 1267 fact sheet](#)

Implementation Efforts

- ◆ **HB 1546, Diligent Participation Credits:** track data through the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to determine the number of people permitted to earn automatic early release credit and the amount of money saved from increased early releases
- ◆ **HB 943, Child Support:** monitor implementation practices of the Office of the Attorney General to determine ... [what are our outcomes?]

Implementation Efforts

- ◆ **HB 578, Reentry Resources:** track ...
- ◆ **HB 549, In-Person Visitation in County Jails:** monitor implementation practices of county jails

Implementation Efforts

- ◆ **HB 1510, Landlord Liability:** partner with direct service providers to ensure that landlords know about liability protection and ... ???
- ◆ **SB 200, SNAP Amendment:** monitor implementation practices of the Health and Human Services Commission and ensure that rules are implemented in a way to preserve SNAP eligibility for individuals who are not reincarcerated

Next Steps in Reentry Policy: 2017

- ◆ Reduce employment barriers—require all state agencies to adhere to EEOC guidance regarding criminal records
- ◆ Reduce housing barriers—transfer EEOC guidance regarding criminal records to housing opportunities
- ◆ Improve access to occupational licenses
- ◆ Ensure accuracy of criminal records provided by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and third-party vendors



Case Example: My Personal Journey



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