

# Expand Access to Rehabilitative Programming for Incarcerated Women

**The Problem:** According to a 2014 survey by TCJC of women incarcerated in Texas prisons, **the majority – 52% – responded** that the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) helped them address their employment training needs **“not well at all.”** Only 19% responded “very well.”

**Women in Texas prisons have access to far fewer educational and vocational programs than their male counterparts.** Through TDCJ and the Windham School District (WSD, which provides educational and vocational services to people in TDCJ), incarcerated women have access to approximately half of the degree plans, certifications, and educational vocational programs offered to men.

It is important to note that WSD provides programming to a greater *proportion* of women than men. WSD Superintendent Dr. Clint Carpenter attributes the high number of female participants to WSD’s efforts over time to build services around women’s needs; he also attributes it to the price: students do not have to pay for WSD courses and certifications.

Also important, **Dr. Carpenter and TDCJ officials have expressed a desire to further expand the number of programs offered to women.**

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“I never came up on any lists for any of the trade classes in prison. I’m trying to educate myself and learn something different, but all they want to do is lock you up and put you to work. If you won’t give me a chance, I’m going to go back to what I know which was criminal activity. They set me up for failure and I had to fight to overcome those obstacles.”

– Angelica, in and out of prison for 17 years

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## **Solution: Support HB 3227 by Howard & Jarvis**

**Johnson:** This bill would require TDCJ to develop and implement policies that **increase and promote incarcerated women’s access to programs**, including educational, vocational, substance use treatment, rehabilitation, life skills training, and pre-release programs. TDCJ must also report annually to state leadership on progress being made to expand program access for women.

**Programming aimed at reducing recidivism among women is an especially cost-effective approach to crime reduction.** To the extent the State can develop effective, recidivism-reduction treatment programs aimed at women, it will likely get a significant return on its investment while strengthening Texas families and communities.

## **SUPPORTERS:**

Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC)

Texas Public Policy Foundation

Texas Association of Business

Texas Appleseed

Texans Care for Children

Christian Life Commission

Goodwill Central Texas

Prison Fellowship

ACLU of Texas

R Street Institute