



**RESPONSE TO SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION'S  
EVALUATION QUESTIONS  
ON THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS**

**JULY 30, 2008**

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**ABSTRACT:** In response to questions posed by the Sunset Advisory Commission in regards to the mission and performance of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS), the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (the Coalition) recently developed an anonymous on-line survey to measure the feedback of Texas Sheriffs, County Court Judges, and Jail Administrators. This survey has allowed the Coalition to determine how they perceive the effectiveness with which county jails in Texas are regulated, so that we may provide the Sunset Advisory Commission, members of the Texas Legislature, and numerous correlated organizations with information about needs in this area. 67 professionals responded to the on-line survey within a three-week period. They answered questions relating to the mission, function, composition, and authority of TCJS; TCJS’s establishment of standards and its various review processes; TCJS’s provision of assistance/training and educational information; key challenges facing TCJS in the future and how it can meet Texas’ needs; and whether TCJS should be continued for 12 years.

The Coalition has developed this document to provide the Sunset Advisory Commission and members of the Texas Legislature with valuable and relevant findings to consider during its examination of TCJS – including during its observations of public hearings, review of testimony, and examination of other expert recommendations regarding the mission and performance of TCJS.

Note that the policy recommendations included in this document are not a reflection of the views and opinions of those who were surveyed.

**KEYWORDS:** *County Jails; Education; Inmates; Inspecting; Jail Construction; Minimum Standards; Municipal Jails; Recreation; Rehabilitation; Staffing; Sunset Advisory Commission; Technical Assistance; Texas Commission on Jail Standards; Training.*

Additional information about this document may be obtained by contacting the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition by phone at (512) 441.8123, Ext. 109, by e-mail at [acorrea@criminaljusticecoalition.org](mailto:acorrea@criminaljusticecoalition.org), or online at [www.criminaljusticecoalition.org](http://www.criminaljusticecoalition.org).

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Dear Sunset Advisory Commission and Staff,

As the Executive Director of the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, I am pleased to present the findings from our survey on the Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS). We are grateful to have received the generous feedback of sheriffs, county court judges, and jail administrators in Texas who routinely deal with the regulation of our county jails.

According to their survey responses, the majority of these practitioners and professionals value the role of TCJS and firmly believe the agency should be continued for 12 years. Respondents commended TCJS' role in maintaining safety, order, and professionalism in Texas jails, as well as their agency's assistance in educating jail administrators about standards and, in turn, preventing lawsuits. However, respondents repeatedly noted that TCJS needs additional funding and staffing, especially in order to provide more training opportunities and technical assistance to jail administrators and personnel, and to ensure that regulations are reasonably and uniformly enforced.

In this upcoming legislative session, it is imperative that the State renew the capacity of TCJS and invest in resources that will assist practitioners in keeping our jails safe, well regulated, and run by educated, professional leadership. This is especially critical in light of what many believe will be an overcrowding crisis facing our jails in the near future if nothing changes now – a problem which will force additional and costly jail construction and maintenance, as well as require additional staffing to meet the demands of exploding populations and aging facilities needing assistance to meet current standards.

An investment in TCJS now will better ensure that confined individuals – both currently and in the future – are treated equally and humanely, and that exiting individuals will have the best opportunity to become responsible and productive members of our communities.

Please join us as we collaborate for fiscally responsible and socially effective means of dealing with our state's offender population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana Yáñez-Correa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing "A" and "C".

Ana Yáñez-Correa  
Executive Director, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Methodology</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Overview of Findings</b>
<b>4</b>	Question 1: Respondents' Professions
<b>4</b>	Question 2: Needed Changes to Mission and Functions of TCJS
<b>4</b>	Question 3: Needed Changes to Make Up of TCJS
<b>5</b>	Question 4: Needed Changes to TCJS' Authority over Jail Facilities
<b>5</b>	Question 5: Effectiveness of TCJS' Establishment of Minimum Standards for Jails, Inmates, and Staffing
<b>5</b>	Question 6: Effectiveness of TCJS' Review and Approval of Jail Construction Plans
<b>5</b>	Question 7: Effectiveness of TCJS' Provision of Technical Assistance and Training
<b>6</b>	Question 8: Effectiveness of TCJS' Production of Reports and Other Jail Information
<b>6</b>	Question 9: Effectiveness of TCJS' Review of Inmate Programs
<b>6</b>	Question 10: Needed Changes to TCJS' Process for Inspecting Jails and Enforcing Minimum Standards
<b>6</b>	Question 11: Key Challenges Facing TCJS in Next 5 to 10 Years
<b>7</b>	Question 12: How TCJS Can Better Meet Needs of Local Governments, Jail Staff, Inmates, and the General Public (Outside of Additional Funding)
<b>7</b>	Question 13: Whether TCJS Should Be Continued for 12 Years
<b>7</b>	Question 14: Additional Comments about TCJS from Respondents
<b>7</b>	Question 15: Comments about Survey or TCJS
<b>8</b>	<b>Policy Recommendations</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Appendix A: Free Response Comments from Respondents, By Question</b>



# RESPONSE TO SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION'S EVALUATION QUESTIONS ON THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS

## INTRODUCTION

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The Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (the Coalition) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to identifying and working towards real solutions to the problems facing Texas' criminal justice system. We do this by educating a broad range of supporters using data-driven policy analysis, partnering with organizations and associations that share our core beliefs, and promoting evidence-based criminal justice solutions that embody the principles of effective management, accountability, public safety, and human and civil rights.

The Coalition's Public Policy Center recently launched an anonymous online survey targeted towards Texas Sheriffs, County Court Judges, and Jail Administrators. Specifically, this survey was intended to address questions posed by the Sunset Advisory Commission in regards to the mission and performance of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS).

Currently, TCJS is responsible for promulgating reasonable written rules and procedures establishing minimum standards, inspection procedures, enforcement policies, and technical assistance for (a) the construction, equipment, maintenance, and operation of jail facilities under its jurisdiction; (b) the custody, care, and treatment of inmates; and (c) programs of rehabilitation, education, and recreation for inmates confined in county and municipal jail facilities under its jurisdiction. TCJS also provides technical assistance and consultation for the State Jail Program.

It is our hope that the findings that emerge from this research will provide a useful snapshot TCJS's current effectiveness in meeting the needs of local governments, jail staff, inmates, and the general public, as well as some ways in which Texas can improve the regulation of county jails, which will be especially imperative in upcoming years as they face the challenges posed by overcrowded jails. Our primary goal is to provide the Sunset Advisory Commission and members of the Texas Legislature with valuable and relevant findings to consider during its examination of TCJS – including during its observations of public hearings, review of testimony, and examination of other expert recommendations regarding the mission and performance of TCJS.<sup>1</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

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In preparation for this survey, the Coalition conducted outreach to numerous practitioners and professionals who routinely deal with the regulation of our county jails. We feel that the perspectives of these sheriffs, county court judges, and jail administrators should drive policies in the

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<sup>1</sup> The Sunset Commission periodically evaluates state agencies to determine if the agency is needed, if it is operating effectively, and if state funds are well spent. Based on the recommendations of the Sunset Commission, the Texas Legislature ultimately decides whether an agency continues to operate into the future. Additional information on the Sunset Commission can be found at [www.sunset.state.tx.us](http://www.sunset.state.tx.us).

areas where the needs are evident. It was with great care for objectivity and inclusiveness during outreach that the information throughout this report was sought.

In all, 67 practitioners and professionals responded to the online survey within a three-week period, representing the views of those who work in large, mid-size, and small counties. Respondents answered questions relating to the mission, function, composition, and authority of TCJS; TCJS' establishment of standards and its various review processes; TCJS' provision of assistance/training and educational information; key challenges facing TCJS in the future and how it can meet Texas' needs; and whether TCJS should be continued for 12 years.

The Coalition in no way altered the responses of survey participants.

## **SUMMARY**

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In the following section, we briefly summarize respondents' feedback so that the Sunset Advisory Commission and other policy-makers can address relevant concerns through innovations in criminal justice planning.

### **◆ Respondents' Professions**

The largest percentage of survey respondents were sheriffs or other members of law enforcement, followed by jail administrators and county judges.

### **◆ Needed Changes to Mission and Functions of TCJS**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel that no changes are necessary to TCJS's mission and functions, followed by a smaller percentage who feel that TCJS could provide additional assistance to jails and counties in their efforts to be safe and compliant. Other respondents feel that TCJS needs additional, consistent, or clarified standards, as well as strengthened enforcement authority over additional correctional facilities.

### **◆ Needed Changes to Make Up of TCJS**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel that no changes are necessary to TCJS's composition, followed by smaller percentages who feel that TCJS should have a wider representation of members from the corrections and medical infrastructure, and that the agency should have additional inspectors.

### **◆ Needed Changes to TCJS's Authority over Jail Facilities**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel that no changes are necessary to TCJS's authoritative capacity, followed by smaller percentages who feel that TCJS either should or should not have authority over additional facilities, and others who feel that TCJS should be more strict and willing to enforce regulations.

- ◆ **Effectiveness of TCJS's Establishment of Minimum Standards for Jails, Inmates, and Staffing**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel that TCJS is effectively establishing minimum standards, followed by a smaller percentage who feel that current standards cannot be and are not uniformly applied.

- ◆ **Effectiveness of TCJS's Review and Approval of Jail Construction Plans**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel TCJS is effectively reviewing and approving plans, followed by a much smaller percentage who have experienced some delays throughout this process.

- ◆ **Effectiveness of TCJS's Provision of Technical Assistance and Training**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel TCJS is effectively providing technical assistance and training to local officials and jail staff, followed by smaller percentages who feel that TCJS could improve in this area, especially with regards to training availability.

- ◆ **Effectiveness of TCJS's Production of Reports and Other Jail Information**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel TCJS is effectively producing reports and other information, followed by a smaller percentage who feel that additional information or distribution of materials would be helpful.

- ◆ **Effectiveness of TCJS's Review of Inmate Programs**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel TCJS is effectively reviewing inmate programs, followed by a smaller percentage who feel that TCJS inspectors could improve the frequency or quality of their review.

- ◆ **Needed Changes to TCJS's Process for Inspecting Jails and Enforcing Minimum Standards**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel no changes are necessary to TCJS's inspection and enforcement processes, followed by smaller percentages who feel that TCJS needs uniform standards and more streamlined enforcement, as well as additional staff and inspectors.

- ◆ **Key Challenges Facing TCJS in Next 5 to 10 Years**

The largest percentages of survey respondents cited jail overcrowding, additional staffing needs, and additional jail construction as the major challenges facing TCJS in the future.

- ◆ **How TCJS Can Better Meet Needs of Local Governments, Jail Staff, Inmates, and the General Public (Outside of Additional Funding)**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel TCJS should provide additional training for jail staff, as well as offer more educational opportunities and information. Smaller percentages

of respondents feel that standards should be more reasonable and regulated, and that TCJS needs additional staff.

◆ **Whether TCJS Should Be Continued for 12 Years**

The largest percentage of survey respondents feel TCJS should be continued for 12 years, including because TCJS's oversight helps to maintain safety, order, and professionalism in our jails; because TCJS helps to prevent lawsuits and liability, and because TCJS assists agencies in various ways, including training.

◆ **Additional Comments**

The largest percentage of survey respondents reiterated that TCJS is a valuable agency that should be continued, but that it needs more staff and funding to be able to provide additional training opportunities and information.

## **OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS**

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Please see Appendix A for all free-response answers provided by survey respondents, per question.

**1. What is your profession? (NOTE: your identity will remain anonymous)**

- 50% = Sheriff/Law Enforcement
- 27% = Jail Administration
- 14% = County Judge
- 9% = Other

**2. What changes, if any, should be made to the mission or functions of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards?**

- 66% = no changes
- 6% = additional assistance to jails and counties in their efforts to be safe and compliant
- 6% = additional, consistent, or clarified standards
- 6% = bring other correctional facilities within TCJS's purview and strengthen enforcement authority
- 5% = additional training and education
- 3% = additional funding for operating costs
- 5% = other
- 2% = no knowledge

**3. What changes, if any, should be made to the make up of the Commission?**

- 50%= no changes
- 20% = wider representation of corrections/medical infrastructure in Commission
- 11% = additional inspectors
- 8% = additional staffing (general)

- 2% = other
- 9% = no knowledge or not applicable

**4. What changes, if any, should be made to the Commission’s authority over jail facilities, including but not limited to county jails, municipal jails, privately-operated facilities, and facilities holding only federal inmates?**

- 55% = no changes
- 18% = should have authority over additional facilities
- 10% = should not have authority over additional facilities
- 5% = should be more strict and willing to enforce regulations
- 5% = pass/fail system needs adjustment
- 7% = other
- 1% = no opinion

**5. How effectively does the Commission establish minimum standards for the construction, equipment, maintenance, and operation of county jails; classification and treatment of inmates; and jail staffing?**

- 80% = effectively
- 6% = standards cannot be and are not uniformly applied
- 5% = there are ways to be more effective
- 5% = small and rural facilities face unique difficulties, especially with compliance
- 3% = other
- 1% = no knowledge

**6. How effectively does the Commission review and approve jail construction plans?**

- 70% = effectively
- 3% = experienced delays
- 5% = other
- 22% = no knowledge or experience

**7. How effectively does the Commission provide technical assistance and training to local officials and jail staff?**

- 62% = effectively
- 12% = need improvement
- 12% = more training needed, specifically
- 8% = other
- 6% = no knowledge

**8. How effectively does the Commission produce population reports and other statewide information about jail?**

- 82% = effectively
- 5% = additional information or distribution would be helpful
- 3% = not effective
- 1% = other
- 9% = no knowledge

**9. How effectively does the Commission review the effectiveness of programs of rehabilitation, education, and recreation for inmates confined in county and municipal jail facilities under its jurisdiction?**

- 68% = effectively
- 8% = not effectively with regards to frequency or quality
- 3% = not TCJS's responsibility
- 3% = other
- 17% = no knowledge

**10. What changes, if any, should be made to the Commission's process for inspecting jails and enforcing with minimum jail standards?**

- 53% = no changes
- 9% = need uniform standards and streamlined enforcement
- 9% = additional staff/inspectors
- 5% = more frequent inspections
- 5% = make changes to pass/fail system
- 5% = TCJS needs more enforcement and authority
- 3% = no surprise inspections
- 3% = need more time/training during inspections
- 3% = the penalty for failing to comply with certain standards should be lessened
- 5% = other

**11. What key challenges does the Commission face in the next 5 to 10 years?<sup>2</sup>**

- 36% = overcrowding (due to increasing jail populations)
- 22% = additional jail and TCJS staffing
- 13% = additional jail construction
- 9% = needed funding
- 6% = aging facilities/poor conditions
- 4% = TCJS's ability to exist and create standards to meet future needs
- 2% = legislative challenges
- 2% = incidental costs (gas/lodging)

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<sup>2</sup> These percentages do not total 100%. The overwhelming majority of survey responses for this question contained more than one challenge; as such, these answer categories were calculated as based on the total challenges mentioned, rather than on the number of respondents who provided answers.

- 4% = other
- 4% = no opinion or knowledge

**12. Outside of additional funding, how can the Commission do a better job meeting the needs of local governments, jail staff, inmates, and the general public?**

- 19% = more training for jail staff; more education and available information
- 10% = additional funding for TCJS
- 10% = standards should be more reasonable and regulated
- 9% = additional staff
- 7% = additional public education about TCJS, incarceration, and relevant laws
- 5% = additional pay for jail staff
- 12% = other
- 28% = no opinion or no changes needed

**13. Should the Texas Commission on Jail Standards be continued for 12 years? Why or why not?**

- 11% = Yes (without specific reason)
- 46% = Yes – TCJS’ oversight helps to maintain safety/order/professionalism
- 17% = Yes – TCJS helps to prevent lawsuits/liability
- 10% = Yes – TCJS assists agencies in various ways, including training
- 10% = Yes for other reasons
- 3% = Maybe
- 3% = No

**14. Please add any other comments about the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. If you suggest any changes, please provide: \* background information on how the current system works and a description of what you would like to see changed, \* benefits of your recommendation, and \* any potential difficulties that may arise from implementing your recommendation.**

- 16% = TCJS is a valuable agency that should be continued
- 13% = TCJS needs more staff and should provide more training and information
- 6% = more accountability should rest on County Commissioners themselves
- 9% = other
- 56% = no additional comments

**15. Thank you for completing this survey. Feel free to add any additional comments.**

- 42% = TCJS is valuable and should be renewed
- 16% = TCJS needs more staff and funding
- 10% = other
- 32% = no additional comments

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Texas Criminal Justice Coalition took survey respondents' feedback into account when developing the following policy recommendations. **However, these recommendations are not endorsed by the respondents.** These are solely the Coalition's recommendations for strengthening the current role of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards.

### **(1) TCJS Should Expand its Educational Role in the Prevention of Jail Overcrowding.**

As many survey respondents noted, one of the major challenges that TCJS will face within the next 5 to 10 years will be addressing the ever expanding jail population. To accommodate this, counties and other municipalities will be forced to expand the number of jails. As more jails are built, TCJS will require additional inspectors and other resources to ensure compliance with set standards.

At this point, TCJS should re-focus its resources to assist jail administrators, county commissioners, and others in developing localized strategies – such as through the use of roundtables composed of key officials – that will concentrate on the reduction of growing jail populations through diversion techniques.

### **(2) TCJS Should Also Expand its Efforts to Inform Jail Administrators and Local Officials about Innovative Reintegration Models to Slow Offender Recidivism.**

A large number of individuals will be exiting county jails in Texas' near future. Many of these individuals will be incarcerated for periods long enough to lose their employment, housing, and, ultimately, the ability to support themselves and their families.

To prevent offenders from falling back on crime as a means of survival, TCJS should be given additional staff that can focus solely on providing technical assistance for programs that provide rehabilitation, education, and re-integration for inmates confined in county and municipal jail facilities under its jurisdiction. Such programs could include (a) group counseling, (b) drug education, (c) basic education programs, (d) transition planning, and (d) aftercare planning.

The State can look to Travis County and Bexar County as models in this regard – their jails have innovative programs that assist inmates in re-integrating back into the community. These programs can be duplicated statewide, and TCJS should be staffed to inform counties about what other jails are doing to prepare inmates for release. Additionally, TCJS staff can look to models in other states for best practices with regards to inmate reintegration.

**(3) The State Should Increase the Funding Appropriated to TCJS So It Can Improve its Functions.**

As repeatedly noted by many survey respondents, TCJS needs additional funding for the following:

- *general operations* to continue the valuable services offered by TCJS to local governments, jail staff, inmates, and the general public.
- *more staff and inspectors*. It is nearly impossible for four TCJS inspectors to comprehensively inspect each of the jails under its jurisdiction, as well as provide staff there with needed technical assistance. Additional, qualified inspectors would increase the frequency of inspections, as well as the quality of inspections by allowing inspectors to consistently enforce regulations and allocate sufficient time to meet local needs.
- *more training availability*. The better trained our jail staff are, the more equipped they are to perform at high and professional standards. Unfortunately, in many counties – big and small – their budgets are often stretched too thin, preventing them from securing training for all jail administrators and personnel. The Legislature should provide additional resources to TCJS so that it can offer free trainings to them in regards to compliance standards; likewise, guards should be trained to better respond to special needs inmates (e.g., with mental or physical illnesses) – correctional healthcare or medical personnel could assist TCJS in providing needed medical and mental health trainings.

**(4) TCJS Should Improve its Public Education Efforts with Regards to Its Complaint Functions.**

Many Texans are unaware of the valuable services offered by TCJS. Oftentimes, an individual's first interaction with TCJS is when s/he may have a loved one in jail and seek out the answer to a question or want to file a complaint about the inmate's conditions. One inexpensive way to make it easier to file a complaint is to offer a 1-800 hotline. This would be especially helpful for those who do not have Internet access.

However, for those who do have access to the Internet, it would be helpful if TCJS directly linked its complaint form to the homepage of its website (rather than at [www.tcjs.state.tx.us/complaint.php](http://www.tcjs.state.tx.us/complaint.php)).

## APPENDIX A: FREE-RESPONSE COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS, BY QUESTION

The following are the written comments from survey respondents that they completed for each question.

### 1. What is your profession?

SHERIFF / LAW ENFORCEMENT	
(1)	Captain, Jail Administrator
(2)	Captain/Jail Administrator
(3)	Chief Deputy
(4)	Chief Deputy Jail Administration
(5)	Chief of Corrections
(6)	Deputy Sheriff over fleet and facility maintenance
(7)	Deputy Sheriff/ Instructor
(8)	Deputy Sheriff/Jailer
(9)	Law enforcement
(10)	Law enforcement
(11)	Law Enforcement
(12)	law enforcement
(13)	Law Enforcement - Jail Administrator
(14)	Law Enforcement Retired: Department of Public Safety Current Position: Chief Deputy
(15)	Law Enforcement/County Corrections
(16)	Lt. Administrator to Sheriff
(17)	Major/Jail Administrator
(18)	SGT/JAILER/DISPATCHER
(19)	SHERIFF
(20)	Sheriff
(21)	Sheriff
(22)	Sheriff
(23)	Sheriff
(24)	Sheriff
(25)	Sheriff
(26)	Sheriff
(27)	Sheriff
(28)	Sheriff
(29)	Sheriff
(30)	Sheriff
(31)	Sheriff
(32)	Sheriff
(33)	Sheriff's Department/Law Enforcement

## **JAIL ADMINISTRATION**

- (34) Chief Jail Administrator
- (35) Jail Administration
- (36) Jail Administrator
- (37) JAIL ADMINISTRATOR
- (38) JAIL ADMINISTRATOR
- (39) Jail Administrator
- (40) Jail Administrator
- (41) Jail Administrator
- (42) Jail Administrator
- (43) Jail Administrator
- (44) Jail Administrator
- (45) Jail Administrator
- (46) Jail Administrator and Dispatch Supervisor
- (47) Jail Lieutenant
- (48) Jailer
- (49) Lieutenant in the County Jail. Certified Correctional Officer and Peace Officer
- (50) Operations Lieutenant Detention Center
- (51) Warden

## **COUNTY JUDGE**

- (52) County Judge
- (53) County judge
- (54) COUNTY JUDGE
- (55) County Judge
- (56) County Judge
- (57) County Judge
- (58) county judge
- (59) County Judge
- (60) County Judge

## **OTHER**

- (61) Consultant
- (62) Economic Development
- (63) Nursing Director
- (64) Program Specialist/Inspector
- (65) State Jail Inspector
- (66) Telecommunications consultant

2. What changes, if any, should be made to the mission or functions of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards?

- NO CHANGES**
- (1) absolutely none
  - (2) Can't think of anything that needs changing.
  - (3) I agree with the mission of the TCJS. They do provide assistance to counties any many ways to help maintain compliance or regain compliance.
  - (4) I don't think any changes to the mission are required. I believe that it is good that they have a focus not only on compliance, but on technical assistance because it allows them to work with counties to reach a common goal.
  - (5) I FEEL THAT YOUR MISSION AND FUNCTIONS ARE ADEQUATE
  - (6) I think that the Jail Commission is a vital part of keeping jails in the State of Texas as uniform as possible, giving us guidelines to help us maintain a safe and secure jail.
  - (7) JAIL COMMISSION DOES THE BEST JOB THEY POSSIBLY CAN WITH THE BUDGET THEY ARE GIVEN
  - (8) No Change
  - (9) No changes at this time that i can think of.
  - (10) No Changes need to be made
  - (11) No comment
  - (12) none
  - (13) None
  - (14) NONE
  - (15) None
  - (16) None
  - (17) None
  - (18) None
  - (19) None
  - (20) None
  - (21) none
  - (22) None
  - (23) NONE
  - (24) None
  - (25) none
  - (26) none
  - (27) None
  - (28) none
  - (29) none
  - (30) none
  - (31) None
  - (32) none
  - (33) None
  - (34) None known.
  - (35) None that I can think of. They are very much on top of it all. Care, custody, treatment, safety, rehabilitation, construction and most of all their technical assistance.
  - (36) None that I can think of. I have had a great working relationship with the commission

- and have always found them to be very helpful and easy to work with.
- (37) None that I know of.
  - (38) None, they oversee and ensure that jails meet standards that protect us all.
  - (39) not really any
  - (40) The Commission meets its mission by providing inspections and assistance to maintain safe county jails.
  - (41) The TCJS has always been helpful and ready to assist us in meeting our goals and objectives. It's amazing that they can provide the services with what limited staff and resources they have.

**ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO JAILS AND COUNTIES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO BE SAFE AND COMPLIANT**

- (42) Assist to Jails in maintaining a safe environment for its employees and inmates.
- (43) Help in the settlement of issues such as, over population from TDCJ inmates.
- (44) While the Commission is charged to uphold standards, it should increase assistance to counties in offering viable short and long term solutions to jail overcrowding. Mental health issues are a statewide problem. I believe this is a MHMR/DSHS issue to provide assistance. Counties cannot continue to house mental health clients in the jails.
- (45) To ensure that all County Jail Facilities meet minimum standards and assist when needed to get them into compliance

**ADDITIONAL, CONSISTENT, OR CLARIFIED STANDARDS**

- (46) I believe the standards in regards to number of staff per jail population should be more relaxed. There is some parity in regards to staffing given the type of institution.
- (47) I would like to see some guidelines and policy regarding 4 point restraint. I was told years ago we cannot use this method of controlling an inmate.
- (48) More specific medical standards that meet national standards recommended by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care
- (49) The mission of the commission is right on target but I feel that the function could be improved by overseeing the inspectors so that there is more consistency from one inspector to another.

**BRING OTHER CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES WITHIN TCJS'S PURVIEW AND STRENGTHEN ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY**

- (50) Be More Strict
- (51) Includes City jail in their requirements
- (52) Pass legislation to allow them to inspect jails that house federal prisoners only. These jails have a very unfair advantage over county run jails in that they do not adhere to inmate to detention officer ratio, they are overcrowded, etc. The Commission would have to hire at least two additional inspectors to accomplish this.
- (53) They should be given sufficient, and immediate, enforcement power in situations where a jail has been identified as unsafe.

**ADDITIONAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

- (54) Additional funding for more training especially in the smaller facilities

<p>(55) Possibly host more free training opportunities. I know that TAC and others offer this but it would be beneficial to all concerned if TCJS also offered more free of charge, training opportunities to help officers who are striving to move forward in their careers. Make certain the jails are complying with existing rules.</p> <p>(56) The Commission should provide more education for the agencies they review.</p>
<b>ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR OPERATING COSTS</b>
<p>(57) The TCJS is working just fine with local sheriffs to make sure that they are following standards set in place. I believe they need more operating money however so that they can get their things done that they already have. They need more salary budget and operating budget money.</p> <p>(58) they should receive additional operational funds</p>
<b>OTHER</b>
<p>(59) Better communication to counties regarding rules changes and legislative updates affecting existing jail designs and applications.</p> <p>(60) TCJS vacillates between the rolls of a tough, hard-nosed regulatory agency and that of being a helpful resource for Sheriff's needing assistance. Clarify the mission since TCJS can't effectively wear both hats.</p> <p>(61) The commission's job should be to assist, not attack, local jails.</p>
<b>NO KNOWLEDGE</b>
<p>(62) N/A</p>

**3. What changes, if any, should be made to the make up of the Commission?**

<b>NO CHANGES</b>
<p>(1) I am satisfied with the addition of a Const. County Judge to Commission</p> <p>(2) I FEEL THAT THE DIRECTOR AND STAFF ARE DOING A FINE JOB</p> <p>(3) It's operating great as is.</p> <p>(4) No Changes</p> <p>(5) No changes necessary; sheriffs have good representation, so are the public and medical field.</p> <p>(6) No comment</p> <p>(7) none</p> <p>(8) None</p> <p>(9) NONE</p> <p>(10) None</p> <p>(11) none</p> <p>(12) None</p> <p>(13) None</p>

- (14) None
- (15) none
- (16) None
- (17) none
- (18) none
- (19) None
- (20) none
- (21) None
- (22) none
- (23) none
- (24) None
- (25) None that can be recommended at this time
- (26) None, I think it is more than fair.
- (27) none, staff is very congenial, willing to help when asked.
- (28) None.
- (29) None.
- (30) None. I have been before this set commission many times and I believe they are very professional, courteous and effective as they are.
- (31) Satisfied with current make up
- (32) The Commission has always been fair to [our] County.

#### **WIDER REPRESENTATION OF CORRECTIONS/MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN COMMISSION**

- (33) Add jail advisors
- (34) Add: DSHS/MHMR representative?
- (35) Broader spectrum of local officials
- (36) Consider the addition/substitution of one or more members with members that have a law enforcement or correction backgrounds: Sheriffs or Chief Jail Administrators
- (37) Have a member of the correctional health care community on the commission.
- (38) Have personnel with experience running or working in the jail/corrections setting.
- (39) I believe that the Commission's make up should consist of former Sheriffs, Jail Administrators, Wardens, etc... Who know what it takes to run a jail facility.
- (40) I do not know if you do this but an ad hoc committee of jail administrators to review proposed changes. The line staff people need to be involved.
- (41) More effort to employ ex-jailers/jail administrators. People who have walked the walk
- (42) More representation from Sheriff's and administrators on policy issues.
- (43) Multi County or all County representation; not just a select few.
- (44) The Commission should stay in closer touch with their constituents and connect with individuals actually working the detention units and the streets. This would pay off in a better understanding and foster communication.
- (45) The sheriff needs to be from a mid size to smaller jail.

#### **ADDITIONAL INSPECTORS**

- (46) Addition of Inspectors to allow for more assistance from regional inspectors.
- (47) Consideration should be given to expanding the number of field inspectors the commission now employs.

<p>(48) More inspectors  (49) more inspectors are needed  (50) More Inspectors with knowledge of Jail Facilities  (51) More inspectors-they only have a few. They are asked to do to much with the man power they have  (52) NEED MORE INPSECTED, AGAIN BUDGET ISSUE. THE INSPECTED ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR TO MANY JAILS.</p>
<p><b>ADDITIONAL STAFFING (GENERAL)</b></p>
<p>(53) Additional personnel in training and technical assistance.  (54) MORE ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL  (55) more personnel  (56) Need more staffing to address issues.  (57) The Commission is operating at minimum staffing. Additional staffing and resources are needed.</p>
<p><b>OTHER</b></p>
<p>(58) Commission members should all have budget, taxing, and security training.</p>
<p><b>NO KNOWLEDGE OR NOT APPLICABLE</b></p>
<p>(59) I am not sure.  (60) N/A  (61) N/A  (62) No opinion  (63) No thoughts  (64) not sure</p>

**4. What changes, if any, should be made to the Commission’s authority over jail facilities, including but not limited to county jails, municipal jails, privately-operated facilities, and facilities holding only federal inmates?**

<p><b>NO CHANGES</b></p>
<p>(1) DO NOT BELIVE AUTHORITY IS AN ISSUE. THEY HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO DO THERE JOB.  (2) I can only speak for the county ran facilities. Their authority is necessary and helps when fighting law suits that do not have any merit. The inspection process helps jail officials determine any area in operation of the facility that needs adjusting/improvement.  (3) I’ve been involved in the “jail facilities” for 26 years in the county jail section. Don’t know about the others. However, I feel that the Texas Commission on jail Standards has been outstanding in every aspect.  (4) No Changes</p>

- (5) none
- (6) None
- (7) NONE
- (8) none
- (9) none
- (10) None
- (11) none
- (12) None
- (13) None
- (14) none
- (15) None
- (16) none
- (17) None
- (18) none
- (19) none
- (20) none
- (21) None
- (22) none
- (23) none
- (24) None
- (25) none
- (26) none
- (27) None
- (28) None, Texas needs a system to ensure facilities are safe for staff and inmates.
- (29) None, we need the oversight of the Commission
- (30) None.
- (31) None. I believe in accountability. Without the Commission, I believe jails would not be up to standards due to limits on smaller county budgets.
- (32) Satisfied
- (33) The commission has been quite helpful to use, and they make themselves available when we need them.
- (34) The commission's authority is focused appropriately.

**SHOULD HAVE AUTHORITY OVER ADDITIONAL FACILITIES**

- (35) ALL entities housing prisoners should be subject to review by the TX Jail Comm. Especially city jails
- (36) All facilities, including privately owned facilities should be regulated by jail standards
- (37) Give authority to TCJS to inspect Municipal Jails under the same guidelines as County Jails.
- (38) I FEEL THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD HAVE MORE AUTHORITY OVER THE JAILS SO THAT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WOULD HAVE TO PROVIDE UPDATES TO STAFF, TRAINING, AND REPAIRS.
- (39) I think all jails should conform to the same standards.
- (40) Include City (municipal) jails. Many city jails do not provide required services (i.e. TB testing, medical, etc.) because they are not regulated.
- (41) Include privately-operated and those holding only federals.

- (42) Private jails and jails that house federal inmates only should be inspected and comply with state jail commission rules.
- (43) Texas Commission on Jail Standards should have authority over all Jails excluding Prisons
- (44) The authority over county jails is appropriate, but they don't have any authority over municipal jails. Private facilities and those holding only federal inmates are not inspected by jail commission. Municipal lockups might not be the biggest threat because of the short length of stay. We need to be more concerned about private operated facilities.
- (45) The Commission should oversee all correctional facilities that are not state owned or run.

**SHOULD NOT HAVE AUTHORITY OVER ADDITIONAL FACILITIES**

- (46) Adding municipal jails to the responsibility of the Commission is not practical. First there are simply too many of them, the proposal will be resisted by city administrators and the added expense alone would not be endorsed by the legislature.
- (47) I do not feel TCJS should over see private facilities that hold only federal prisoners. The federal government has their own inspectors now.
- (48) Jail Commission should not be involved in institutions holding only Federal Inmates
- (49) Should be limited to responding to specific, bona fide complaints, not going over decent jails with a fine tooth comb trying to find a blemish.
- (50) The Commission should continue to have authority over county jails and county owned facilities. If the Commission is assigned authority over municipal jails then additional resources will be needed to meet the mission.
- (51) They have plenty already.

**SHOULD BE MORE STRICT AND WILLING TO ENFORCE REGULATIONS**

- (52) Be more Strict.
- (53) The Commission NEEDS to enforce the rules with larger facilities such as Harris and Bexar. These two violate TCJS rules routinely with impunity. I know this for a fact. The rule should remain 1 to 48 and inspections should slam agencies that do not comply.
- (54) They need to have more authority over the safety of jails. Counties need to become (responsible) for the conditions of the facilities they run, BEFORE things get so serious after too many years of shucking their responsibilities. I have been through several county jails in the last two years and these places are scary.

**PASS/FAIL SYSTEM NEEDS ADJUSTMENT**

- (55) Their pass fail system needs to go. Most counties fear them versus embrace them because of this system.
- (56) There should be intermediate sanctions and opportunities to get into compliance before a facility fails an inspection for minor problems!!!
- (57) No changes other than that noted in #11 (Classify jail inspection criteria into two or more classes such as life safety and technical and then grade the jail based on these criteria. Do not have a jail "fail" inspection due to minor technical violations)

## OTHER

- (58) Commission's authority is good as it stands. Consideration should be given to empowering or giving the Executive Director the authority to arbitrate and/or make standing rulings on a case-by-case basis on issues dealing with compliance issues of jail standards. If he can make decisions to correct issues at his level, then he should have that authority. On more complicated issues, decisions can still be made but may require the advice and consent of the Commission.
- (59) Commission's authority only to "recommend" changes, not "demand" changes.
- (60) Mental Health and Classification paperwork is overwhelming. A central database would be helpful. File and information sharing between TDCJ, MHMR, parole and probation, would be ideal. TCJS should have complete authority over all detention and holding facilities in Texas.
- (61) MORE INPUT ON BEHALF OF THE SMALL JAILS

## NO OPINION

- (62) No opinion

### 5. How effectively does the Commission establish minimum standards for the construction, equipment, maintenance, and operation of county jails; classification and treatment of inmates; and jail staffing?

## EFFECTIVELY

- (1) An outstanding job and they are always open for suggestions and conversation.
- (2) Based on their limited staffing they do the best job they can
- (3) Construction standards, maintenance, classification & inmate care is good, getting better on stressing jail staffing issues.
- (4) Each inspector does a great job insuring all the above are checked at least once yearly to insure each jail and its staff are doing the job the commission requires.
- (5) effective
- (6) effectively.
- (7) Fine
- (8) fine
- (9) Good
- (10) good
- (11) Good
- (12) Good
- (13) GREAT JUST LOOKING OUT FOR THE INMATES
- (14) I feel that they have establish good standards and enforce these standards fairly with all County Jails
- (15) I think it does its work well
- (16) I THINK THAT THE COMMISSION OVERSEES FAIRLY THE OPERATION OF COUNTY JAILS. I THINK THAT THE COMMISSIONS MINIMUM

STANDARDS ON CLASSIFICATION, TREATMENT OF INMATES, AND JAIL STAFFING IS SIMPLY THAT, MINIMUM STANDARDS. IT IS UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL JAIL ADMINISTRATOR AND THE STAFF TO ALWAYS STRIVE TO DO BETTER IN ALL THESE AREAS.

- (17) In my opinion-very well, we've been thru two building projects & one staff review. W/O staffing reviews some counties would not supply enough staff
- (18) No complainant
- (19) No problem
- (20) Quite Satisfactory
- (21) Standards are effective as of this date
- (22) The Commission is very effective in everything that they do. They have demonstrated good leadership.
- (23) The commission standards are well established to provide for a secure facility, ensure proper life safety equipment is installed and the court provide adequate funds for the maintenance department, The standards provides guidelines to operate a safe, secure and clean facility.
- (24) The Jail Commission is very effective at establishing standards.
- (25) The minimum standards are effective and attainable.
- (26) The minimum standards are very effective. The TCJS should maintain the current standards and effectiveness.
- (27) The present administration is establishing and enforcing minimum standards. I don't feel past administration has enforced the standards as should have.
- (28) The standards are effective.
- (29) The standards set forth by the Commission are very effective in maintaining that all aspects of the process are properly followed by all.
- (30) They are effective.
- (31) they are very effective in there job
- (32) THEY ARE VERY EFFECTIVE WITH THE STAFF AND BUDGET THEY ARE ALLOCATED.
- (33) very effective
- (34) Very effective
- (35) Very effective
- (36) Very effective
- (37) very effective
- (38) Very effective
- (39) Very effective
- (40) Very effective in county jails.
- (41) Very effective, and must have for Sheriff's.
- (42) Very effective, because we have an older jail, I believe that some of the standards are more than we can handle, but we do know there has to be a limit
- (43) Very effective.
- (44) Very effectively
- (45) Very effectively
- (46) very effectively
- (47) Very effectively.
- (48) VERY GOOD
- (49) Very Well

- (50) very well
- (51) very well
- (52) We have an ongoing relationship concerning the above mentioned issues. The TCJS staff works with all levels of our management team to ensure we have the help and support needed to carry on our day to day operations.

**STANDARDS CANNOT BE AND ARE NOT UNIFORMLY APPLIED**

- (53) Each inspector has a different idea--rarely does one agree with the other. As they expect us to have one standard, they should also.
- (54) The only issue is in regards to acknowledging the age and capability of certain equipment in jails that were built during times of different standards. Sometimes it is not feasible or possible to restructure equipment to current standards. In other words some barometers for compliance.
- (55) The standards set cover a jail of 1 to 8000 population
- (56) There needs to be a better means upon which rules and standards are made. Have a more common sense approach to setting these rules and standards. They should take into account these are not resort facilities and residents are not tourist. There is no consistency in how the rules and standards are applied from facility to facility, especially on those facilities that are not county jails.

**THERE ARE WAYS TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE**

- (57) I think they should have more unauthorized inspections, which will make them very effective. Right, now it's not as effective.
- (58) New construction is very closely monitored by the commission. Its the OLD jails that the state needs to force counties to do something with.
- (59) Poorly.

**SMALL AND RURAL FACILITIES FACE UNIQUE DIFFICULTIES, ESPECIALLY WITH COMPLIANCE**

- (60) minimum standards may be too strict in remote rural counties
- (61) Special exceptions should be made for very small jails, i.e. having to have and maintain SCBA apparatus when the jail is only a few square yards in size or have a very small capacity. Would take longer to put on the SCBA than to extract the inmates with a minimal amount of protection or none at all.
- (62) The jail staffing issue needs to be addressed concerning small sized jails.

**OTHER**

- (63) Effectively establishes minimum standards, however minimum standards do not necessarily protect the offender population from harm nor the facility from liability.
- (64) Sometimes hesitant to implement standards such as banning strip searches except with reasonable suspicion which is a well established federal court standard in the 5th Circuit.

## NO KNOWLEDGE

(65) unknown

### 6. How effectively does the Commission review and approve jail construction plans?

## EFFECTIVELY

- (1) AVERAGE
- (2) effective
- (3) effective enough
- (4) effectively
- (5) Effectively. They have been helpful to us in this regard.
- (6) Excellent
- (7) fine
- (8) First Class! I'm sure you'd receive the same response from design teams, engineers, architects, contractors....etc.
- (9) From personal experience, the Commission staff provides excellent and timely assistance.
- (10) Good
- (11) Good
- (12) Good
- (13) Have had no problems.
- (14) I think well considering they need additional inspectors. This would allow more time for technical assistance during development and then in operaitons.
- (15) It has been very effective in helping us review plans for a new facility
- (16) No problems that are known.
- (17) OK
- (18) ok
- (19) okay
- (20) okay
- (21) Seems to be ok
- (22) The Commission has always taken the necessary time to review and approve our construction projects.
- (23) They are very effective.
- (24) They are very effective.
- (25) THEY ARE VERY EFFECTIVE WITH THE STAFF AND BUDGET THEY ARE ALLOCATED.
- (26) They are very helpful in reviewing construction plans. We are currently in design phase for a new facility and the TCJS has been very cooperative.
- (27) Very
- (28) Very effective
- (29) Very effective
- (30) Very effective
- (31) very effective

- (32) Very effective and knowledgeable.
- (33) Very effective, the Commission employs several highly skilled individuals who review planning documents.
- (34) Very effectively
- (35) very effectively
- (36) Very effectively
- (37) Very effectively.
- (38) VERY GOOD
- (39) very good
- (40) very well
- (41) Very Well
- (42) very well
- (43) very well
- (44) very well
- (45) Very well. Brandon does a very thorough job.

#### **EXPERIENCED DELAYS**

- (46) delay due to staffing constraints
- (47) Hard to say, I'm still waiting since April.

#### **OTHER**

- (48) ALL entities housing prisoners should be subject to review by the TX Jail Comm. Especially city jails
- (49) In some Counties the TCJS is all they have.
- (50) They are very firm. They will work with you somewhat but, they have the final say.

#### **NO KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE**

- (51) I have not had any new construction to my facility, so I could not answer this question honestly.
- (52) N/A
- (53) N/A
- (54) N/A
- (55) n/a to me
- (56) N/A, have not had to have any construction.
- (57) N/AA
- (58) No experience
- (59) No experience in this category. No comment
- (60) No opinion.
- (61) No recent experience in this area.
- (62) unknown
- (63) unknown
- (64) Unknown

7. How effectively does the Commission provide technical assistance and training to local officials and jail staff?

**EFFECTIVELY**

- (1) All we have to do is pick up the phone or send e-mail
- (2) Anytime we asked for assistance they responded with professionalism and enthusiasm.
- (3) AVERAGE
- (4) Based on their limited staffing they do the best job they can
- (5) During our inspections or upon request it has always been my experience to receive technical assistance.
- (6) effectively
- (7) Every time I call I get a quick response.
- (8) Excellent
- (9) Excellent, they have always been available for us.
- (10) Extremely effectively
- (11) GOOD
- (12) Good
- (13) good
- (14) Good. It is always offered and when request are made, they provide the assistance and training
- (15) Have received assistance in a timely fashion.
- (16) I FEEL THAT THE COMMISSION AND ITS INSPECTORS HAVE HELPED ME VERY MUCH. I BEGAN THIS CAREER WITH NO JAIL EXPERIENCE BUT WITH 25 YEARS LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE. IT WAS A REAL EYE-OPENER. MUCH MORE WENT INTO THIS JOB THAT I EVER DREAMED. THE COMMISSION STAFF WERE GREAT.
- (17) OK
- (18) The commission does provide help with certain questions that are rarely come across in training and are gracious at helping when it is needed.
- (19) The commission employees are always available and very knowledgeable.
- (20) The Commission has always assisted when needed or contacted by this agency.
- (21) The commission is one of our greatest tools when it comes to technical assistance. I have never been turned away. They are most helpful. The training has been available always.
- (22) they are always there to help and answer questions when needed
- (23) THEY ARE VERY EFFECTIVE WITH THE STAFF AND BUDGET THEY ARE ALLOCATED.
- (24) They do a good job in these areas
- (25) They do an excellent job in assisting with training. I have personally had the privilege to do a good bit of instructing with the Commission. They are always well prepared and have selected topics that are important to county jails.
- (26) They get back with you when you have a question or are re-doing your jail plans, etc...
- (27) They have been there to answer my questions. As for training, this facility has not had any from the Commission.
- (28) very effective
- (29) Very effective

- (30) Very effective
- (31) very effective
- (32) Very effective
- (33) Very effective and knowledgeable.
- (34) very effective just have to ask
- (35) Very effective.
- (36) very effectively
- (37) Very effectively
- (38) Very effectively. I have personally called and been given a great deal of help.
- (39) Very Well
- (40) Very well. I'm sure they need more of a training budget though.

#### **NEED IMPROVEMENT**

- (41) Could improve
- (42) I think this is an area that needs vast improvement. It has been my experience that when asked about a policy, being referred to inquire at another county is not an answer. There needs to be a centralized policy bank covering areas that apply to all facilities where one can receive guidance.
- (43) It seems to be somewhat infrequent due to the reduced staffing levels afforded to the commission.
- (44) Large jail, almost none, but that is understandable, just be consistent on what you expect.
- (45) None. Commission find a problem, tells you it need fixed but provides little help in finding Companies that will fix the areas that need attention.
- (46) Not enough!! Not enough!! Not great customer service.
- (47) Not very effective, Texas is pretty big. Not their fault
- (48) seems to be adequate but limited

#### **MORE TRAINING NEEDED, SPECIFICALLY**

- (49) Additional employees are needed to train and provide technical assistance to local officials and staff.
- (50) I would like to see more training.
- (51) Need to have correctional health care or at least medical personnel perform medical and mental health training.
- (52) Technical assistance and education is moderately effective, as they lack some resources. Education needs to be improved. Facilities with 30-40 beds can't afford for anyone to go to school or have training/technical assistance. They need to have someone that can visit and provide technical assistance training to the officers. The facilities that need the most help are 100 beds or less.
- (53) The training is usually co-hosted with the Texas Jail Association. These trainings are very beneficial to all correctional agencies. I believe they should hold more of these trainings to keep agencies and officers up to date on standards and legislative changes. The technical assistance they provide is very good.
- (54) They could increase the training as long as it was timely, relevant and not repetitive in nature.
- (55) They do a great job but are stretched to thin. We would like more training more often.

Texas is a big state with a lot of counties. Many times training budgets are limited. The TJA show takes most of the allocated training \$\$\$, you can send only so many people to that show, leaving the majority of staff left behind.

(56) Training none-their assistance is great

#### **OTHER**

(57) As a jail inspector, I feel I am effectively and adequately providing technical assistance to all facilities. Some facilities are more receptive to assistance than others.

(58) Brandon is a great help. Inspectors, not so much.

(59) TCJS vacillates between the rolls of a tough, hard-nosed regulatory agency and that of being a helpful resource for Sheriff's needing assistance. Clarify the mission since TCJS can't effectively wear both hats. Some agencies are hesitant to ask for assistance for fear TCJS will show up in their hard-nosed regulatory role.

(60) Tech assistance is good training, in what context?

(61) The only technical assistance that has been received here is during inspections.

#### **NO KNOWLEDGE**

(62) I've not directly received, so I do not know. But my guest is that they do what they do well and could do better with more inspectors

(63) N/A

(64) unknown

(65) Unsure

### **8. How effectively does the Commission produce population reports and other statewide information about jail?**

#### **EFFECTIVELY**

(1) Acceptable.

(2) Anytime we have asked for information they produced it in a timely manner.

(3) As well as any other large Commission or Government agency.

(4) effective

(5) Effective

(6) excellent

(7) Excellent

(8) fairly effective

(9) Fine

(10) fine

(11) Good

(12) good

(13) good

(14) Good

(15) good

- (16) good
- (17) Good.
- (18) Good. Have been helpful when reports are requested and they provide the desired information
- (19) GREAT VISUAL AND THE INSPECTOR TELLS YOU AND SHOWS YOU YOUR PROBLEMS
- (20) I feel that any information that is requested is readily available. Sometimes I don't feel this is in the best interest of the jail(s).
- (21) I FEEL THE COMMISSION DOES A GREAT JOB.
- (22) In a very timely manner or whenever requested.
- (23) Information has always been made available upon request and are distributed routinely at quarterly meetings.
- (24) No problem
- (25) OK
- (26) ok
- (27) okay
- (28) Quite effectively.
- (29) Sufficient.
- (30) The Commission is always on top of statistics and are made available to anyone that asks for them.
- (31) The email population reports are great, posting info electronically is very effective and efficient
- (32) These reports are very effective in the daily operations of the jails.
- (33) They are fine in the reports; they do that work well.
- (34) They are regular.
- (35) THEY ARE VERY EFFECTIVE WITH THE STAFF AND BUDGET THEY ARE ALLOCATED.
- (36) They do a good job.
- (37) They do a very efficient job in reporting information.
- (38) Very
- (39) very effective
- (40) Very effective
- (41) very effective
- (42) very effective
- (43) very effective
- (44) Very effective and timely manner
- (45) Very effective based on the information provided by the counties.
- (46) very effectively
- (47) Very effectively.
- (48) very well
- (49) Very well
- (50) very well
- (51) very well
- (52) Very well in a timely manner.
- (53) well

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR DISTRIBUTION WOULD BE HELPFUL**

- (54) As effectively as their resources allow. Central database and file sharing would be ideal. Real-time information would be nice.
- (55) In my opinion very well with current staffing. Bi-annual reports would be beneficial
- (56) Need more detail on # of bookings and average length of stay.

**NOT EFFECTIVE**

- (57) Not enough
- (58) not timely from my observation

**OTHER**

- (59) I believe it would be effective as long as the reports they receive are accurate.

**NO KNOWLEDGE**

- (60) I am not familiar.
- (61) UNKNOWN
- (62) Unknown
- (63) Unknown
- (64) Unsure
- (65) Unsure!

**9. How effectively does the Commission review the effectiveness of programs of rehabilitation, education, and recreation for inmates confined in county and municipal jail facilities under its jurisdiction?**

**EFFECTIVELY**

- (1) Can only speak for my facility, but the review is very thorough & complete
- (2) Doing a good job.
- (3) effective
- (4) Excellent
- (5) Fine
- (6) fine
- (7) good
- (8) good
- (9) GOOD
- (10) good
- (11) Good
- (12) Good job
- (13) I believe they review these programs effectively as they keep in mind the agencies needs as well as the inmates' rights.

- (14) I CAN ONLY SPEAK FOR MARK WILSON AND GEORGE JOHNSON. BOTH HAVE HELPED THIS FACILITY BY BEING AS STRICT AS THEY ARE IN MAKING US DO A BETTER JOB
- (15) it has been my experience that the inspectors review all programs provided
- (16) my opinion is that we accomplish this very effectively
- (17) No Complainant
- (18) often
- (19) Ok
- (20) okay
- (21) Sufficient.
- (22) They are effective. They have assisted me in updating or making changes on the above mentioned programs.
- (23) They are on top of county jail plans.
- (24) They are very effective and respond very rapidly when inmates complain of any violations in this question. Of all persons in the commission that I have spoke with, in this area, I have received nothing but their utmost attention.
- (25) THEY ARE VERY EFFECTIVE WITH THE STAFF AND BUDGET THEY ARE ALLOCATED.
- (26) They do a good job.
- (27) they do well
- (28) They ensure that our programs and recreation are conducted thoroughly and by the book.
- (29) Very effective
- (30) very effective
- (31) Very effective
- (32) very effective
- (33) very effective for county jails
- (34) Very effective.
- (35) Very effective.
- (36) very effectively
- (37) Very effectively
- (38) Very Effectively during annual jail inspections.
- (39) very thorough when inspecting the facility
- (40) Very Well
- (41) well enough

**NOT EFFECTIVELY WITH REGARDS TO FREQUENCY OR QUALITY**

- (42) Again, some parity exists due to the difference in funding availability between larger cities and counties. It seems that one size fits all.
- (43) Not as effective as it could be
- (44) poorly on education and rehabilitation
- (45) Should be more often
- (46) Only at inspection or when a complaint is filed.

**NOT TCJS'S RESPONSIBILITY**

- (47) Not as effectively. Not their mandate.
- (48) Those items are not under their authority

**OTHER**

- (49) Somewhat, county jails by their nature are not long term facilities. Rehabilitation isn't a practical goal and education initiatives can only be basic programs such as increasing reading levels.
- (50) They do not review effectiveness of any programs that I am aware of.

**NO KNOWLEDGE**

- (51) Do not know.
- (52) don't know
- (53) I am not aware of their doing this.
- (54) I am not sure how they do this so I cannot comment.
- (55) Unable to answer.
- (56) UNKNOWN
- (57) unknown
- (58) Unknown
- (59) Unknown.
- (60) We don't get inspected, so it would be hard to say

**10. What changes, if any, should be made to the Commission's process for inspecting jails and enforcing with minimum jail standards?**

**NO CHANGES**

- (1) Every Jail Inspector I have been in contact have been very good at providing new standards and going through records and info effectively every time they have visited our facility.
- (2) Have had a good relationship with all the inspectors and have found them to be very knowledgeable and very fair.
- (3) I don't believe that it's broke - so it doesn't need fixing
- (4) I have no recommendations at this time.
- (5) It seems to be working adequately
- (6) no changes
- (7) No Changes
- (8) No changes necessary. They do a good job.
- (9) No changes should be made. Commission inspectors conduct announced and unannounced inspections.
- (10) none
- (11) None

- (12) NONE
- (13) none
- (14) none
- (15) None
- (16) None
- (17) none
- (18) None
- (19) none
- (20) None
- (21) NONE
- (22) None
- (23) none
- (24) None
- (25) None
- (26) None at this time
- (27) none, I like the check and balance between the commission staff and the commission members
- (28) None, they are very professional.
- (29) None, they are very thorough.
- (30) None.
- (31) Nothing
- (32) Process is alright. We have received good and fair inspections by the inspectors.
- (33) The Commission does a good job with the resources that they currently have.
- (34) think they are doing a good job now

**NEED UNIFORM STANDARDS AND STREAMLINED ENFORCEMENT**

- (35) Every inspector should be on the same page as far as inspections. what is good for one should be good for all
- (36) Make it a general rule, either un-announced or announced. Really doesn't matter which way, just having the information ready for the inspector to review is the issue.
- (37) On-site inspections are a must. Announced if a facility is in good standing. Unannounced if there is a history of non-conformance.
- (38) The inspection of jails should be completed the same by each inspector. Currently, each inspector has their own areas of concern; therefore, they all inspect facilities differently.
- (39) The inspection process is effective, the enforcement process is flawed. If the Commission determines that a facility fails to meet standards the dance begins. The County is giving timelines for correcting the issues, the counties come in and counter, the commission may issue a remedial order, then the county appeals, then there is a SOAH hearing, then potential legal action, all the while a safe and unsuitable jail may continue to operate. I understand due process but I have seen a number of situations that border on ridiculous and the commission's hands appeared tied.
- (40) The standards should be listed. An institution should know what they are looking for. It should not be a guessing game. One year, one inspector looks at toilet handles and water flow, another year an inspector looks at court gun lockers.

### **ADDITIONAL STAFF/INSPECTORS**

- (41) have at least two more inspectors
- (42) I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE JAIL INSPECTOR MORE THAN ONCE A YEAR BUT I KNOW WITH LIMITED MANPOWER AND THE NUMBER OF JAILS INSPECTED, THIS WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.
- (43) more staffing
- (44) they need more inspectors
- (45) THEY NEED MORE STAFFING
- (46) Train more people and hire more staff to do nothing but inspections.

### **MORE FREQUENT INSPECTIONS**

- (47) None, maybe more surprise inspections
- (48) Possibly a closer working relationship with more frequent casual inspections as opposed to a one time visit. Also, more recommendation as to how better operate with existing facilities.
- (49) Quarterly Inspections would be welcomed. It would raise the minimum standards and encourage ideas. This would also show the County Commissions that jails are still a part of the county system and need to be funded and maintained by quality, professional staff.

### **MAKE CHANGES TO PASS/FAIL SYSTEM**

- (50) Classify jail inspection criteria into two or more classes such as life safety and technical and then grade the jail based on these criteria. Do not have a jail "fail" inspection due to minor technical violations.
- (51) No pass or fail system. Work with the counties and they will come in line
- (52) Provide an opportunity for jails to reach compliance with minor issues before failing the facility!!

### **TCJS NEEDS MORE ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY**

- (53) Enforce existing rules, most especially one to forty-eight.....
- (54) More Authority.
- (55) They need the authority to close a jail without having to go through the A.G., they should be able to do it and recourse could be for the AG to review its actions. Serious safety concerns shouldn't be scheduled M-F 8-5, it may require immediate actions to save some lives.

### **NO SURPRISE INSPECTIONS**

- (56) It is my opinion that inspections should be announced and there should be more consistency between inspectors.
- (57) No surprise inspections.

### **NEED MORE TIME/TRAINING DURING INSPECTIONS**

- (58) As an inspector, I feel that more time should be allowed at most facilities. I feel that better inspections require additional time than has been allotted in past. Unfortunately, we are still kept on same timeline for inspections.
- (59) Provide more on-site training during inspections.

### **THE PENALTY FOR FAILING TO COMPLY WITH CERTAIN STANDARDS SHOULD BE LESSENERED**

- (60) Perhaps a bit of leniency for jails in the process of building new facilities and having difficulties in finding other housing for excess inmates in the meantime.
- (61) Some items should be a little more lenient such as how fast the hot water gets to a shower head.

### **OTHER**

- (62) consideration should be given to local officials
- (63) Should be limited to responding to specific problems.
- (64) This is where the problem occurs, the way changes are made; by “demand” rather than recommendations.

## **11. What key challenges does the Commission face in the next 5 to 10 years?**

### **OVERCROWDING (DUE TO INCREASING JAIL POPULATIONS)**

- (1) A growth in the persons being incarcerated in the smaller counties where county jails have limited bed space and county budgets do not allow for the building of new jails.
- (2) Adapting to the issues counties face of ever increasing jail populations
- (3) Aging facilities, increasing inmate populations and increased responsibilities without sufficient funding by the legislature.
- (4) Assisting counties that are rapidly outgrowing their facilities and facing difficulties getting new facilities approved by their respective counties.
- (5) Bed space, new construction, and jail staffing and liability issues.
- (6) Changes in legislation, more people in jails, more demands on counties, with less money.
- (7) continued increase in jail population
- (8) Ever increasing inmate population.
- (9) growth of jail population and decrease in personnel to operate the jails
- (10) Increasing jail populations statewide.
- (11) Jail overcrowding, due to counties not being able get bonds passed.
- (12) Jail Population and getting local government to build jails due to over crowding.
- (13) Jail populations are booming, straining everyone.
- (14) keeping up with the inmate growth with such a small staff
- (15) like every thing population
- (16) More facilities mean a need for more inspectors. Growing populations-older populations mean geriatric facilities

- (17) OVER CROWDING
- (18) Over crowding and under staffing
- (19) Over crowding in jails which will cause automatic failure due to staffing and inmate over crowding
- (20) OVER CROWDING OVER POPULATION LESS OFFICIALS AND JAILERS PEOPLE TO RUN THE FACILITIES
- (21) Over population can be expected
- (22) overcrowding
- (23) Overcrowding and budget constraints. We need to educate county commissioners as to the need to build new facilities.
- (24) Overcrowding of county jails due to increased prison populations at the State level.
- (25) Overcrowding problems and solutions
- (26) Overcrowding, meeting the needs of facilities with very little staffing, i.e. inspections, training, technical assistance, updating key issues, working with communities to assess needs, cost saving assistance. The Commission's ability to serve will be hindered by personnel vs. numbers of facilities. Communities are experiencing staffing issues based on inmate/staff ratios.
- (27) overcrowding, staffing, training
- (28) Population growth. It takes a day and a half to conduct the inspection in my jail of less than 500 beds; in 10 years my jail is expected to have around 1100 beds. The commission is going to need more inspectors for that. Currently, they only have 4 inspectors.
- (29) Population increase, poor jail conditions
- (30) population of inmates and staffing
- (31) return rates to county jails
- (32) Rise in jail population, especially in rural/smaller counties.
- (33) Rising numbers of incarcerations of prisoners especially females.
- (34) Staffing over population
- (35) State wide overcrowding even in the smaller jails, and Counties not able to build or pay to house outside
- (36) The issue of agencies ability for employee retention, over crowding, mental health issues, parole violations and/or blue warrants.
- (37) THIS FACILITY HAS NEVER BEEN OVER THE STATED MAXIMUM POPULATION BUT MOST FACILITIES HAVE BEEN. I CAN FORESEE THAT THIS WILL BE A PROBLEM WITH THIS FACILITY IN THE FUTURE

#### **ADDITIONAL JAIL AND TCJS STAFFING**

- (1) #1 staffing for the Commission, to cover the current & future jails & expansions
- (2) a large increase in development of facilities and perhaps not enough staff to provide the technical assistance up front which will led to problems down the road
- (3) Bed space, new construction, and jail staffing and liability issues.
- (4) County jail staffing. Hiring employees at low wages vs. City jail
- (5) growth of jail population and decrease in personnel to operate the jails
- (6) keeping up with the inmate growth with such a small staff
- (7) More facilities mean a need for more inspectors. Growing populations-older populations mean geriatric facilities
- (8) Over crowding and under staffing

- (9) Over crowding in jails which will cause automatic failure due to staffing and inmate over crowding
- (10) OVER CROWDING OVER POPULATION LESS OFFICIALS AND JAILERS PEOPLE TO RUN THE FACILITIES
- (11) Overcrowding, meeting the needs of facilities with very little staffing, i.e. inspections, training, technical assistance, updating key issues, working with communities to assess needs, cost saving assistance. The Commission's ability to serve will be hindered by personnel vs. numbers of facilities. Communities are experiencing staffing issues based on inmate/staff ratios.
- (12) overcrowding, staffing, training
- (13) Population growth. It takes a day and a half to conduct the inspection in my jail of less than 500 beds; in 10 years my jail is expected to have around 1100 beds. The commission is going to need more inspectors for that. Currently, they only have 4 inspectors.
- (14) population of inmates and staffing
- (15) Probably a shortage of personnel. Texas is growing by leaps and bounds and more jails will be built.
- (16) Recruitment and retention of qualified staff due to inadequate salary.
- (17) STAFFING AND FUNDING. THE STATE OF TEXAS NEEDS TO GIVE MORE FUNDING THE JAIL COMMISSION HAS A TOUGH JOB AND THE POLITICIANS MAKE IT TOUGHER WHEN THEY DO NOT GIVE THEM THE FUNDING NEEDED.
- (18) Staffing over population
- (19) the bigger challenge is to keep its employees and keep its head above ground due to a lack of government funding.
- (20) The issue of agencies ability for employee retention, over crowding, mental health issues, parole violations and/or blue warrants.
- (21) The need for more and better trained inspectors.
- (22) There are more agencies building new facilities, therefore, the TCJS needs to make sure they have the staff to coordinate these projects.

#### **ADDITIONAL JAIL CONSTRUCTION**

- (1) #1 staffing for the Commission, to cover the current & future jails & expansions
- (2) A growth in the persons being incarcerated in the smaller counties where county jails have limited bed space and county budgets do not allow for the building of new jails.
- (3) a large increase in development of facilities and perhaps not enough staff to provide the technical assistance up front which will led to problems down the road
- (4) Assisting counties that are rapidly outgrowing their facilities and facing difficulties getting new facilities approved by their respective counties.
- (5) Bed space, new construction, and jail staffing and liability issues.
- (6) Jail overcrowding, due to counties not being able get bonds passed.
- (7) Jail Population and getting local government to build jails due to over crowding.
- (8) More facilities mean a need for more inspectors. Growing populations-older populations mean geriatric facilities
- (9) Overcrowding and budget constraints. We need to educate county commissioners as to the need to build new facilities.
- (10) Probably a shortage of personnel. Texas is growing by leaps and bounds and more jails

will be built.

- (11) Rising travel costs (gas/hotel) and more beds being built.
- (12) State wide overcrowding even in the smaller jails, and Counties not able to build or pay to house outside
- (13) The continued construction of new jails to meet standards and replace outdated facilities.
- (14) There are more agencies building new facilities, therefore, the TCJS needs to make sure they have the staff to coordinate these projects.

#### **NEEDED FUNDING**

- (1) Aging facilities, increasing inmate populations and increased responsibilities without sufficient funding by the legislature.
- (2) Changes in legislation, more people in jails, more demands on counties, with less money.
- (3) Overcrowding and budget constraints. We need to educate county commissioners as to the need to build new facilities.
- (4) STAFFING AND FUNDING. THE STATE OF TEXAS NEEDS TO GIVE MORE FUNDING THE JAIL COMMISSION HAS A TOUGH JOB AND THE POLITICIANS MAKE IT TOUGHER WHEN THEY DO NOT GIVE THEM THE FUNDING NEEDED.
- (5) the bigger challenge is to keep its employees and keep its head above ground due to a lack of government funding.
- (6) Funding available to the Counties to maintain out dated facilities within small County population base. There should be an “exception” rule for older jails.
- (7) keeping up with the Sheriffs rising cost of keeping inmates
- (8) May not the commission but, the commissioners of the county are going to be faced with a lot of expense. It’s not cheap operating a county jail now days. New rules and regulations cost money and lots of it.
- (9) funding, legislative challenges

#### **AGING FACILITIES / POOR CONDITIONS**

- (1) Aging facilities, increasing inmate populations and increased responsibilities without sufficient funding by the legislature.
- (2) Aging jails and new construction projects.
- (3) Population increase, poor jail conditions
- (4) The age of the jails they will be inspecting.
- (5) The continued construction of new jails to meet standards and replace outdated facilities.
- (6) Upholding the rules and standards to aging facilities Dealing with these aging facilities and the increasing of the future inmate populations and how the rules and standards will be applied and enforced

#### **TCJS’S ABILITY TO EXIST AND CREATE STANDARDS TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS**

- (1) Creating standards that meet the needs of the growing and aging offender population.
- (2) Standardization of inspection procedures used by various inspectors. Clarifying the agency’s role as stated in #3
- (3) The key challenge is to insure that they continue to exist and oversee the operations of

<p>all jails.</p> <p>(4) The rise in the number of “private” jails and no one to over see them or make sure they meet standards.</p>
<p><b>LEGISLATIVE CHALLENGES</b></p>
<p>(1) Changes in legislation, more people in jails, more demands on counties, with less money.</p> <p>(2) funding, legislative challenges</p>
<p><b>INCIDENTAL COSTS (GAS/LODGING)</b></p>
<p>(1) Gas prices</p> <p>(2) Rising travel costs (gas/hotel) and more beds being built.</p>
<p><b>OTHER</b></p>
<p>(1) Bed space, new construction, and jail staffing and liability issues.</p> <p>(2) overcrowding, staffing, training</p> <p>(3) Scalability</p> <p>(4) The issue of agencies ability for employee retention, over crowding, mental health issues, parole violations and/or blue warrants.</p>
<p><b>NO OPINION OR KNOWLEDGE</b></p>
<p>(1) Do not know</p> <p>(2) N/A</p> <p>(3) No opinion.</p> <p>(4) They are adapting very quickly to the changes of new expectations of new crimes and drugs.</p>

**12. Outside of additional funding, how can the Commission do a better job meeting the needs of local governments, jail staff, inmates, and the general public?**

<p><b>MORE TRAINING FOR JAIL STAFF; MORE EDUCATION AND AVAILABLE INFORMATION</b></p>
<p>(1) All agencies would appreciate the TCJS educating Commissioner’s Courts across the state, which could allow more counties to get better cooperation with the Commissioners. They also could provide more training to correctional staff throughout the year. They currently only provide training during the Fall.</p> <p>(2) Allow more jails to send their staff to Austin (Free of course) to express their jails needs and learn from others.</p> <p>(3) Conduct more training; be more accessible to local governments and the general public.</p> <p>(4) Constant communications</p> <p>(5) Educating the agencies they inspect. Make the inspection process less adversarial. Work to try and see facilities stay in compliance and not just punish them if they are not.</p>

- (6) Free training for jail staff.
- (7) I believe that they should hold more classes that intermediate jailers need, free of charge in prime locations.
- (8) If they don't already possibly assisting smaller rural counties with grants for their facilities, be more active in training jail staff, and let the general public [know] what the Commission does.
- (9) MORE TRAINING
- (10) More updates
- (11) THE COMMISSION IS ALREADY STRETCHED TOO FAR ON FUNDING AS WELL AS MOST JAIL FACILITY. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE ANNUAL CONVENTION AND SUPERVISOR CLASSES BE MADE MANDATORY SO THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS WILL HAVE TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO ATTEND.

#### **ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR TCJS**

- (12) Additional funding is the key to meeting current and expanded needs.
- (13) Any improvements would require additional funding.
- (14) Funding is very important in order for TCJS to effectively do its job.
- (15) Funding provides staff, who in turn provide solutions, so I can't name any other improvements needed
- (16) I believe that funding would only improve on the good job that do now.
- (17) Without additional funding this would be unreasonable.

#### **STANDARDS SHOULD BE MORE REASONABLE AND REGULATED**

- (18) Allow more stringent guidelines for inmate compliance. This would reduce the amount of return customers.
- (19) Establish policies that are applicable to all facilities and all facilities follow that policy. The Jail Commission should establish policies for facilities to follow so there is consistency among jails of how to handle common situations.
- (20) Institute more specific standards.
- (21) More fairness and a more common sense approach in how they enforce these rules and standards. If a jail facility does not comply or is deficient in one area within the jail, do not fail the whole jail, fail that portion that needs to be corrected, don't fail the whole jail facility and pull their certificate.
- (22) Provide a inventory list of what exactly they are looking at and the standard they want.
- (23) Stop using a "one size fits all" approach to enforcing standards such as staffing ratios. Make a local determination as to the staffing level based on totality of circumstances.

#### **ADDITIONAL STAFF**

- (24) AGAIN NEED MORE STAFFING!
- (25) increase staffing
- (26) more staff
- (27) More inspectors and they should be spread out over the state as to make their travel easier and more productive

(28) only suggestions would incur additional staffing/funding

#### **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC EDUCATION ABOUT TCJS, INCARCERATION, AND RELEVANT LAWS**

- (29) Educating the public on why construction of detention facilities is necessary and why tents are not a reasonable option.
- (30) Better awareness and understanding of why we actually a commission. We need to be able to provide additional training and technical assistance.
- (31) I don't think it's the jail commission. It's the Federal Gov. Again, it's the money factor. Sometimes the commission has its hands tied and the public does not know this. The public needs to know it's the law.
- (32) public awareness of cost of running a jail and mandates set by legislature

#### **ADDITIONAL PAY FOR JAIL STAFF**

- (33) Ask for better pay for jail staff to compensate for what other entities pay in the area.
- (34) Get all the jailer's improved pay and insure that the counties are made to follow the rules where pay is concerned. Jailer's have a dangerous job and aren't paid for what they do.
- (35) Support higher wages for jail staff

#### **OTHER**

- (36) Be available to testify during local Commissioner's Court hearings.
- (37) Be diligent in inspecting. PEOPLE DON'T DO WHAT YOU EXPECT, THEY DO WHAT YOU INSPECT!!!
- (38) Hold commissioners (individually) responsible for the "lack" of actions concerning the safety of prisoners instead of it always falling on the sheriff. The Sheriff can't do anything without the money being provided by a commissioner's court.
- (39) Let us run our own jail.
- (40) more interaction with jail inspectors
- (41) Quit harassing counties that are truly working to keep jails in compliance or under construction.
- (42) Work with the Counties to fix the problems. Assist in finding venders who can solve the problems that the Commission has noted.

#### **NO OPINION OR NO CHANGES NEEDED**

- (43) Continue current procedures.
- (44) I am satisfied with current situation
- (45) I think they are doing ok as far as meeting our needs
- (46) I, myself, believe they are doing all they can at this point with the information that they proved each facility with.
- (47) Keep on doing what's right, it's working for you.
- (48) N/A
- (49) N/A
- (50) n/a
- (51) No opinion

- (52) No other recommendation.
- (53) They actually do a great job considering their level of funding.
- (54) They are doing a good job now.
- (55) They do a great job now with the county jails.
- (56) They do a very efficient job with what they have
- (57) UNKNOWN
- (58) Unknown

**13. Should the Texas Commission on Jail Standards be continued for 12 years? Why or why not?**

**YES (WITHOUT SPECIFIC REASON)**

- (1) Absolutely!
- (2) Absolutely!!!
- (3) I have no problem with the Commission's continuing through the next "sunset cycle"
- (4) yes
- (5) Yes
- (6) yes - doing a good job
- (7) YES THE JAIL COMMISSION DOES A GREAT JOB AND ARE VERY MUCH NEEDED. I DO NOT BELIEVE THE POLITICIANS KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THEY ARE AND HOW THEY DO THEIR BEST TO HELP US IN ANYWAY THEY CAN AND WITH THE ASSETS THEY HAVE.

**YES – TCJS'S OVERSIGHT HELPS TO MAINTAIN SAFETY/ORDER/PROFESSIONALISM**

- (8) Absolutely, standards of the commission provide for safe, secure and sanitary facilities. If the counties fail to provide such facilities then the commission should be empowered with greater enforcement capabilities.
- (9) Definitely to ensure the jail standards are being carried out. need a governing body
- (10) I think there needs to be an oversight agency so my answer is yes.
- (11) There has to be some sort of checks and balances. There will be no perfect system, work with what we have and improve where weaknesses are found.
- (12) YES THERE HAS TO BE A STANDARD IN ORDER TO KEEP SAFE AND LEGAL JAILS
- (13) yes they keep jails stay at a higher standard of up keep and professionally run.
- (14) Yes they should be renewed for 12 years. If it were not for the jail commission, counties would be left on their own to determine what is acceptable or necessary. I have seen states that don't have jail standards and we need to make sure that the Commission is continued.
- (15) YES TO SHOW THE OFFICIALS HOW TO RUN THE JAIL BETTER W/LESS PROBLEMS
- (16) Yes we need them. If we don't answer to a higher power there will be havoc reeked
- (17) Yes, I think Texas leads the nation in the quality and enforcement of jail standards. Just imagine where we could be if we had the per capita allocations of New York or

California.

- (18) Yes, if the commission were not in place there would not be any controlling authority on jails. Someone has to hold entities accountable to ensure that standards are met.
- (19) Yes, it is a needed agency to keep at least a minimum standard.
- (20) Yes, it is needed to oversee the jails.
- (21) Yes, it provides vital roles in ensuring jails are meeting at least minimum standards.
- (22) Yes, some counties definitely need oversight. To not have a jail commission, there would be no check and balance regarding county jails.
- (23) Yes, the service they provide to counties is necessary to keep a county in compliance and to receive the funding necessary to staff and operate the facility.
- (24) Yes, there has to be someone that challenges our commissioners and local governments to keep the jails in their counties functional.
- (25) Yes, to make sure counties do what they are suppose to do.
- (26) Yes, to see that offenders' rights are protected, and that they are humanely cared for.
- (27) Yes, very efficient and effective agency. Saves tax \$ in the long run because of watchdog efforts
- (28) YES, we need them to keep all jails in Texas to a minimum standard for all involved.
- (29) Yes, without Jail Standards many jails would become understaffed...
- (30) Yes. As much as we may resent (at times) the "intrusion" of the Jail Commission, I feel that if we had no Jail Commission levels of operation would not be held to the same high standards across the board causing major problems for some counties and for the individuals charged with the care and custody of incarcerated individuals.
- (31) Yes. Jail Standards provides uniformity of security and services to protect communities, prisoners, and staff.
- (32) Yes. Needed for the continue safety and welfare of the jail populations. Holds us accountable.
- (33) Yes. For those counties that hold county inmates. Some type of over sight is needed.
- (34) Yes. TCJS is an asset for the jails. It assures that the safety of the public ,inmates and jail staff meets a minimum standard at all facilities. It helps to keep liability issues down.
- (35) Yes. To ensure inmates are treated right and facilities are safe.
- (36) Yes....they are an effective tool in the management of jail facilities. They act as an oversight agency to maintain a equitable level of service throughout the state. They assist agencies in obtaining needed training, staffing levels, etc
- (37) YES!!!!!! WITHOUT THE COMMISSION I WOULD HATE TO THINK WHAT WOULD HAPPEN ON THE LOCAL LEVELS IF LEFT TO COMMISSIONERS COURT RUNNING THE FACILITY. THE COMMISSION GETS BETTER WITH TIME, TRIED AND PROVEN GUIDELINES FOR "ALL" JAILS TO FOLLOW.

#### **YES – TCJS HELPS TO PREVENT LAWSUITS/LIABILITY**

- (38) Absolutely. Reduced risk of lawsuits due to complete lack of compliance to any standards.
- (39) I feel that the commission is a necessity forever due to the fact that the problems in jails are ever increasing and someone needs to be able to monitor and help jails reduce liabilities and problems.
- (40) The Commission should continue with the mission who provides inspections and assistance to insure safe county jails. The Commission is important in the effort to

minimize liability for counties that operate a county jail

- (41) Yes they should be continued. Jails need to be routinely inspected by an outside control source. It helps keep us out of lawsuits and make sure that the jails are being kept at least minimum standards for safety and security.
- (42) Yes, it is greatly needed. Without standards we will be in courts with all type of law suits. Plus the training is great when we get it.
- (43) Yes, the benefits of standards with carefully considered variances granted by the commission will prevent a host of law suits that will in the long run cost more money that doing it right upfront.
- (44) Yes, the Commission is very beneficial to agencies across the State. I have taught officers around the country and throughout the State of Texas. When I have talked to officers from other states which do not have Commissions regulating them, they all have major issues to overcome. Each agency in those states runs their facility as they see fit. It is very beneficial to Texas agencies to have the Commission, which sets standards for us to abide by, because if the Commission was not there to set these standards we would have a lot more law suits and staff or inmates being injured.
- (45) Yes, without jail standards we will be back in the 70's and 80's with several lawsuits on standards in court.
- (46) Yes, without standards for facilities to meet the jail situation would be come unbearable and liabilities would increase
- (47) Yes. very effective way to keep Sheriff's and counties out of trouble
- (48) Yes. All county jails have to meet the same standards. It makes it fair for all and it helps with legal aspects of the job.

#### **YES – TCJS ASSISTS AGENCIES IN VARIOUS WAYS, INCLUDING TRAINING**

- (49) Hell yes they need to continue. Without the jail commission we'd be lost. They are such a guide and personal assistant I could not operate without them. You need rules and regulations in this world; I would not like to live any place that didn't have them. I can only benefit for news a few miles away. The commission benefits for all over Texas and other states. They pass it on to us locals
- (50) Yes, Due to the fact that the employees are very diligent in their jobs and are very helpful to small agencies with limited resources.
- (51) Yes, it not only holds each jail facility that is under their jurisdiction to a high standard than other jails. The Commission also helps when inexperienced individuals to gain the knowledge to become knowledgeable while in the jail setting to lower crimes of all kinds. I am a strong supporter of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards.
- (52) Yes. The TCJS is always willing to assist with any problem or concern that my staff may have. They were of great assistance to me when I enlarged my jail and had to hire additional personnel. The future growth estimate of my county as far as projected jail inmate growth was invaluable. I believe that Texas Sheriffs are fortunate to have TCJS.
- (53) Yes they provide a very necessary service.
- (54) Yes, they provide an essential service to the state and also the individual jails they help.

#### **YES FOR OTHER REASONS**

- (55) Continued- I would hate to see Texas revert back to what it once was or what some

- states are now
- (56) It should be continued. Otherwise jails will fall into the category of being inspected by federal accreditation. These federal accreditation agencies are nowhere close to doing what TCJS is doing. Federals, although claiming to be stricter than TCJS, are not doing what they are supposed to be inspecting. Private jails claim to be inspected by federals but this is doubtful.
  - (57) Yes for continuity
  - (58) Yes, the Jail Commission is our voice in Austin and works well with other law enforcement organizations.
  - (59) YES, we (sheriffs) don't want to go back to the days where the Courts ran the County Jails. There are several Counties in Texas that would not do anything to improve their jails if we did not have the TCJS. Texas is an example to other States because of the TCJS.
  - (60) Yes. But mission must be clarified. It should definitely not be placed under the umbrella of TDCJ, TCLEOSE, DPS or any other entity.

**MAYBE**

- (61) I believe that if there is a time limit, then no, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards should not be continued for 12 years. I believe that local governments with some type of state assistance can run jails up to the standards already set by the Commission.
- (62) It would depend on what the goals for the Texas Commission on Jail Standards are for the 12 years. I also believe that smaller counties could keep up jail standards with the possibility of either a regional commission or an independent commission within the county, which would consist of persons appointed by the Governor to oversee jail standards within the region or county.

**No**

- (63) No.
- (64) No. Let the Counties monitor themselves.

**14. Please add any other comments about the Texas Commission on Jail Standards.**

**TCJS IS A VALUABLE AGENCY THE SHOULD BE CONTINUED**

- (1) During the last inspection the Commission conducted the most thorough examination of our facilities in years. It helped us identify some areas that we need to work on.
- (2) I have no doubt that TCJS has kept many counties out of law suits. If a jail is run according to the law and TCJS standards, then inmates have very little reason to sue. I know that lawsuits will still occur, but it helps so much when you have the evidence that you run your jail according to jail standards. TCJS is a state organization to help the counties, the Sheriffs and the inmates. I hope they just keep on doing what they have been doing since I have been Sheriff for the last 14 years.
- (3) I have operated a facility for over 15 years and have always found the TCJS firm, but fair and available to assist the county with their needs

- (4) The Jail Commission actually serves the needs of the county jails, the taxpayers and the incarcerated individuals as well as their families. They establish standards, review for compliance and take corrective action. There is no tangible way to quantify the amount of money the commission has saved counties across the state that are in compliance. Litigation that never came about because a county operated within the guidelines, litigation that was resolved to the county's benefit due to compliance, lives that were saved because of safe suitable jails and jail operations. The Commission serves a greater good that we can't begin to put our finger on. Is everyone happy with the outcome of an individual jail, complaint or situation? Certainly not, but the proper outcome is generally achieved.
- (5) Without the jail commission, many jails would be severely understaffed and under funded since most county governments view the jails as a drain on the budget. The jail commission has assisted the Sheriffs in obtaining adequate staffing and resources to properly operate their jails. Without the jail commission, some large counties would only provide the jails the required resources when forced by the Federal Courts. Dallas County is a prime example.

**TCJS NEEDS MORE STAFF AND SHOULD PROVIDE MORE TRAINING AND INFORMATION**

- (6) I think that when changes to the standards are changed, the jails should be given the opportunity to meet the mandates according to their abilities. As was explained to me, which could be their own defense, but I have to go with the information given, the smoke evacuation testing procedures were changed. It seems our smoke evacuation systems passed the old test, but new testing methods were put into the testing, without time given for the counties to make the changes. The newer method added millions of dollars to the cost of changing the system. Of course, the commissioners' court was not willing to quickly make the change. It cost us several years of not passing inspection.
- (7) More inspectors with experience in Jail facilities and problems encountered by staff and Sheriffs
- (8) The biggest change is additional training/support for jails and facilities are needed. We do provide quite a bit of technical assistance, but the biggest complaint I hear is that the smaller facilities don't get the same attention and training that the larger facilities receive due to funding and staffing restrictions. Much of the non-compliance issues could be resolved with full understanding of standards and compliance issues. Of course, this would require additional time being spent at the facilities which means, additional travel expenses (gas/lodging/food...etc). I feel that the State of Texas should strive to be iconic for all other states to strive for. We have the largest Jail Association membership than any other state. This only proves that there are many dedicated facilities and people in the field of corrections.
- (9) The State of Texas needs to keep the Commission. If anything is changed, there needs to be more staff, higher salaries and more training.

**MORE ACCOUNTABILITY SHOULD REST ON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS THEMSELVES**

- (10) Have the focus always remain with partnering and helping the jails. Continue with staffing inspections and hold county commissioners feet to the fire about funding safe jails.

(11) Place more individual responsibility on county commissioner's courts to see that they maintain their jails.

**OTHER**

(12) I believe that Texas needs to review best practices / regulations of other states' jail standards bi-annually and make recommendations to the Governor/Legislature. IE... new configurations of building, sprinkler systems, classifications, staffing ratios.

(13) Like so many agencies, try to justify its existence by being tough, making things hard on counties and cities. We don't need that.

(14) Majority of repeat offenders are lacking in basic education, and there seems to be no way to address this in a county jail environment with short jail stays.

**NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

(15) already addressed above

(16) As stated above.

(17) I'm finished

(18) N.A.

(19) N/A

(20) N/A

(21) N/A

(22) N/A

(23) N/A

(24) No additional comments.

(25) No Changes.

(26) No comment

(27) No further comments are necessary

(28) none

(29) None

(30) None

(31) NONE

(32) None

**15. Thank you for completing this survey. Feel free to add any additional comments.**

**TCJS IS VALUABLE AND SHOULD BE RENEWED**

(1) Adan Munoz and his staff have always acted very professional with my staff and been very helpful. I strongly urge the State of Texas to continue funding this Commission. Without their oversight jails could become a potential liability for staff as well as inmates.

(2) I have no issue w/ jail Comm seeing my comments

(3) Keep the Commission

(4) Leave the jail commission in place, and not use anymore timelines. They need to be here to stay.

(5) TCJS does a great service. We need to keep them going another twelve years or longer.

- (6) The Texas Commission on Jail Standards is a good agency.
- (7) The Texas jail Commission is necessary to insure safe county jails across the state of Texas.
- (8) We need the commission.

**TCJS NEEDS MORE STAFF AND FUNDING**

- (9) The Jail Commission should be provided the funding and staff to continue inspecting and assisting the county jails and to include City jails in order to provide a consistent set of standards for all municipal and county lockups in the State. Their existence insures that Sheriffs throughout the State will continue to be properly funded.
- (10) The Sunset Commission needs to seriously consider retaining the Commission without adding to its mission without adequate funding.
- (11) THE POLITICIANS NEED TO LISTEN REAL HARD WITH THE PROBLEMS THE JAILS HAVE AND WHAT HELP THE JAIL COMMISSION CAN BE AND ARE. THEY ARE LIMITED ONLY BECAUSE OF STAFFING AND FUNDING THEY ARE NOT GETTING. EVERYONE ON THE JAIL COMMISSION STAFF IS A PROFESSIONAL AND TAKE PRIDE IN WHAT THEY DO. WE APPRECIATE THEM; IT IS TO BAD THAT THE GOVERNOR AND OTHER ELECTED OFFICIALS DO NOT REALIZE THIS. THEY ARE TO BUSY TRYING TO GET VOTES INSTEAD OF DOING WHAT IS RIGHT. HAS A POLITICIAN REALLY WORKED A DAY OF THERE LIFE. MOST POLITICIANS DO NOT HAVE ANY REAL IDEA WHAT IS GOING ON BECAUSE THEY DO NOT GO OUT AND SEE WHAT IS GOING ON THEY ARE IN THERE OWN LITTLE WORLD. TOO BUSY SITTING IN THERE OFFICE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET ELECTION CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THERE NEXT ELECTION.

**OTHER**

- (12) Statutory provision and/or commission rules should be added and/or changed to provide that inmates may be housed in military style tents without regard to temperature differentials. Also, if provisions do not presently exist which permit and require inmates to perform labor services in gardens and livestock activities for the production of food for consumption by inmates, appropriate statutorily rule changes should be made to so provide.
- (13) Thank you for your time and attention

**NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

- (14) N/A
- (15) N/A
- (16) N/A
- (17) N/A
- (18) No comment
- (19) None