



**TEXAS CRIMINAL
JUSTICE COALITION**

**UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTIONS OF
INCARCERATION, REHABILITATION, EDUCATION,
RE-ENTRY, & OTHER ISSUES: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
THE SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION**

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ABSTRACT: The Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC) recently developed an anonymous on-line survey to measure Texans’ perceptions of key aspects of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). This survey has allowed TCJC to determine how the public perceives the purpose of Texas’ prison systems, as well as the range of services provided for prisoners during and after their incarceration. Over 4,000 Texans of various socioeconomic, racial, and generational backgrounds responded to the survey within a two week period. They answered questions relating to prisoner mail, prisoner visitation, prisoner family assistance, prisoner recreation, services for children of the incarcerated, the purpose of TDCJ, prevention of drug re-offense, public safety, education, criminal justice spending, criminal justice budgeting, re-entry, and hiring of former offenders.

TCJC has developed this document to provide the Sunset Advisory Commission with socially relevant findings to consider during its audit of TDCJ, including during its observations of public hearings, review of testimony, and examination of other expert recommendations regarding the manner in which TDCJ should administer its prisons, its parole and probation systems, and its treatment programs.

KEYWORDS: *Criminal Justice; Incarceration; Inmate(s); Prisoner(s); Prison System; Re-entry; Rehabilitation*

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UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTIONS OF INCARCERATION, REHABILITATION, EDUCATION, RE-ENTRY, & OTHER ISSUES: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Texas Criminal Justice 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 identifying and educating the public using cost-effective and innovative tools, partnering with organizations who 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 Research & Public Education Center of the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC) recently launched an anonymous on-line survey to measure the public's perceptions of key aspects of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) so that it may provide the Texas Legislature, the Sunset Advisory Commission, and numerous correlated organizations with valuable information needed to draw conclusions about this particular agency under review. Over 4,000 Texans with various socioeconomic, racial, and generational backgrounds responded to the on-line survey within a two week period. They answered questions relating to a full range of services currently provided to Texas' incarcerated population; they provided their views on how spending should be structured; and they shared insight into what they believe the fundamental purpose of Texas' prison system should be.¹ Overall, the public perception of the purpose of Texas' prison system, as well as the range of services provided for prisoners during and after their incarceration, is of key concern to TCJC, its partners, and its constituents.

What must be noted before the findings are presented is that the mission of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice is to provide public safety, promote positive change in offender behavior, reintegrate offenders into society, and assist victims of crime. Additionally, the TDCJ has asserted that its primary functions include the following: (1) providing diversions to traditional prison incarceration by the use of community supervision and other community-based programs as a method for impacting the demand for additional prison capacity; (2) providing a comprehensive continuity-of-care system for special needs offenders through statewide collaboration and coordination in a manner that facilitates successful release and reentry into the community; (3) providing for confinement, supervision, rehabilitation, and reintegration of adult felons into the community; (4) ensuring and maintaining adequate housing and support facilities for convicted felons during confinement; and (5) providing supervision and administering the range of options and sanctions available for felons' reintegration into society following their release from confinement.²

In order to express how this mission is conceptualized by Texans who have a familiarity with this crucial state system, TCJC has prepared the following summary of findings and recommendations to provide the Sunset Advisory Commission with socially relevant elements to consider during its audit of TDCJ, including during its observations of public hearings, review of testimony, and examination of other expert recommendations regarding the manner in which TDCJ should administer its prisons, its parole and probation systems, and its treatment programs.

¹ For a full listing of survey questions, please see page Appendix A. In addition, for comments provided by survey participants in relation to these issues, please see Appendix B.

² See Texas Department of Criminal Justice. (2005). "Report to the Texas Sunset Commission: Self Evaluation Report, August 19, 2005." (www.sunset.state.tx.us/80threports/tdcj/ser.pdf)

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

• Demographics of Survey Respondents

The 4,000-plus individuals that participated in the anonymous on-line survey administered by the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition's Research & Public Education Center were 56% female and 44% male; 72% were born after 1960; 82% were of families that had lived in the United States for at least two generations; 59% lived in households that made \$45,000 or less annually; and 59% and 41% were White and Non-White respondents respectively. A full range of professions were represented among survey participants, including the following: 'Enrolled College Students' 37%, 'Research and Education' 13%, 'Government' 6%, 'Technology' 6%, 'Non-Profit' 4%, 'Legal' 4%, 'Health' 4%, 'Human Services' 3%, 'Religious Services' 3%, 'Law Enforcement' 2%, 'Food Services' 1%, 'Arts and Culture' 1%, 'Environment' 0.4%, and 'Hospitality' 0.4%.

Additionally, a range of educational levels were also represented; the highest level of education completed by participants was the following: 'Some College' 34%, 'Bachelor Degree' 29%, 'Master Degree' 18%, 'Doctoral Degree' 5%, 'Associate Degree' 5%, 'High School Diploma' 3%, 'Professional Degree' 3%, 'K-8th Grade' 0.1%, and 'Some High School' 0.4%.

Last, it must be noted that 1,313 (33% of) survey participants have had no exposure to the prison system while 1,074 (27%) have or have had a family member or friend in prison.

• Survey Part 1: Services

NOTE: The Texas Department of Criminal Justice has published a handbook, the *General Information Guide for Families of Offenders*, which provides a brief description of the offender program areas and services offered by TDCJ.

In a series of questions relating to these current services provided to prisoners (i.e., mail, visitation, family assistance, recreation, and children services), most respondents believe that a greater range of amenities and opportunities for interaction should be made available.

- **CURRENT POLICY:** Prisoners cannot have food, clothing, jewelry, and toiletries mailed to them by anyone, nor can they receive books, magazines, and newspapers unless mailed by the publisher.

No change in policy: 35% of respondents

Change in policy: 65% of respondents

Of the survey respondents who would like to see a change in policy, many want prisoners to have more access to certain items through the mail:

- 88% want increased access to books
- 80% want increased access to newspapers
- 68% want increased access to magazines
- 49% want increased access to toiletries
- 37% want increased access to food
- 34% want increased access to clothing
- 8% want increased access to jewelry³

³ The percentages in these responses do not add up to 100% because survey participants were given the option of selecting more than one item.

- **CURRENT POLICY:** Prisoners get one 2-hour visit per weekend, with up to two adult visitors; children under 16 years of age are not counted towards that total.

(1) *With regards to the frequency and amount of time allowed for visitation:*

No change in policy: 42% of respondents

Change in policy: 58% of respondents

Of the survey respondents who would like to see a change in policy, the majority want family members and friends to have increased opportunities to visit prisoners:

- 97% want increased visitation opportunities
- 3% want fewer or no visitation opportunities

(2) *With regards to the number of visitors prisoners can have:*

No change in policy: 44% of respondents

Change in policy: 56% of respondents

Of the survey respondents who would like to see a change in policy, the majority want more family members and friends to be allowed visitation:

- 96% want an increased number of visitors
- 4% want a fewer number of or no visitors

- **Respondents were informed during the survey that individuals with questions or concerns about their incarcerated family member can talk to their Family Liaison Officer during visitation hours. If no sufficient answer is given or no resolution is reached, the family can speak to a TDCJ Ombudsman.**

When asked what (if any) additional services should be made available to families of the incarcerated, four recommendations emerged:

- 80% want families to be notified prior to visitation of the potential unavailability of the prisoner (e.g., the prisoner is in administrative segregation)
- 66% want family counseling services to be made more available
- 47% want greater legal assistance
- 37% want transportation for children who would like to visit an incarcerated family member⁴

Three questions were posed that relate to the current recreational activities available for prisoners.

- **CURRENT POLICY:** Depending on their classification, medical status, and security factors, prisoners have access to basketball, handball, volleyball, and weightlifting in gymnasiums or outdoor recreation yards.

No change in policy: 56% of respondents

Change in policy: 44% of respondents

Of the survey respondents who would like to see a change in policy, the majority want prisoners to have more access to ball games and weightlifting in gymnasiums or outdoor recreation yards:

- 75% want increased access to ball games and weightlifting
- 25% want less or no access to ball games and weightlifting

⁴ The percentages in these responses do not add up to 100% because survey participants were given the option of selecting more than one recommendation.

- **CURRENT POLICY:** Depending on their classification, medical status, and security factors, prisoners have access to television sets in dayrooms.

No change in policy: 50% of respondents

Change in policy: 50% of respondents

Of the survey respondents who would like to see a change in policy, the majority want prisoners to have less access to television sets in dayrooms:

- 44% want increased access to television sets
- 56% want less or no access to television sets

- **CURRENT POLICY:** Depending on their classification, medical status, and security factors, prisoners' have access to table games (checkers and dominoes), reading, artwork, and leatherwork in the library and craft shops.

No change in policy: 31% of respondents

Change in policy: 69% of respondents

Of the survey respondents who would like to see a change in policy, the majority want prisoners to have more access to table games, reading, artwork, and leatherwork in the library and craft shops:

- 93% want increased access to table games, reading, artwork, and leatherwork
- 7% want less or no access to table games, reading, artwork, and leatherwork

- **Studies have found that children are 6-8 times more likely to end up in jail themselves if they have or have had one parent in prison. Furthermore children are 9 times more likely to end up in jail themselves if they have or have had two parents in prison.**

In consideration of these trends, survey respondents believe that the following programs or recommendations would be effective in preventing children of the incarcerated from entering prison:

- 87% want children with incarcerated parent(s) to be provided counseling
- 75% want children with incarcerated parent(s) to have access to tutoring programs to increase their educational success
- 51% want additional parent-child contact through increased visitation time
- 44% want incarcerated parent(s) housed in a facility as close to their children as possible
- 34% want the caretakers of children with incarcerated parent(s) to be provided financial support⁵

⁵ The percentages in these responses do not add up to 100% because survey participants were given the option of selecting more than one program or recommendation.

- **The popular belief that increased education offsets rates of incarceration is due in part to a finding that only two-thirds of prisoners in Texas' prison system have completed high school.**

In consideration of this finding, the majority of survey respondents want Texas to spend money on increasing high school graduation rates:

- 87% believe that there would be a reduction in the number of people entering prison if Texas increased the amount of funding directed towards high school graduation rates
- 13% believe that there would be no impact on the number of people entering prison if Texas increased the amount of funding directed towards high school graduation rates

- **Survey Part 2: Treatment and Spending**

- **Respondents were informed during the survey that the Texas Department of Criminal Justice manages approximately 157,000 adult prisoners in state prisons, state jails, and private correctional facilities.**

When asked what they think the primary purpose of state prisons, jails, and correctional facilities should be, most survey respondents assert that it should be to rehabilitate a person convicted of a crime:

- 35% believe the primary purpose is to reintegrate offenders into society through rehabilitation (a key component of the mission of TDCJ)
- 24% believe the primary purpose is to protect the public's safety by removing violent criminals from the streets (another component of the mission of TDCJ)
- 22% believe the primary purpose is to reduce recidivism rates
- 10% believe the primary purpose is to deter future crime from occurring
- 9% believe the primary purpose is to punish a person convicted of a crime through confinement

The order of these findings should be recognized as significant, specifically that the components of deterrence and punishment of crime rank lowest by survey respondents who were asked to determine the purpose of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Two questions were included to help clarify public perceptions of recidivism and public safety.

- **When asked to consider an element of recidivism, specifically what they thought would prevent a non-violent drug user from committing a drug-related crime again, the majority (96%) of survey respondents rank programs outside of prison walls the highest:**
 - 36% want non-violent drug users to report regularly to a probation officer with immediate placement in drug treatment if they commit a drug-related probation violation
 - 35% want non-violent drug to be given treatment
 - 18% want non-violent drug users to report regularly to a probation officer with immediate placement in prison if they commit a drug-related probation violation
 - 7% want non-violent drug to undergo mandatory community service or another non-incarceration based punishment
 - 4% of respondents want non-violent drug users to be sent to prison

- **When asked how they would feel if non-violent, non-sexual offenders were sent to treatment programs rather than prisons, most survey respondents assert that they would feel safer:**
 - 44% believe that sending non-violent non-sexual offenders to treatment programs rather than prisons would make Texans safer
 - 43% believe that sending non-violent non-sexual offenders to treatment programs rather than prisons would make Texans equally as safe as it is now
 - 10% believe that sending non-violent non-sexual offenders to treatment programs rather than prisons would make Texas less safe
 - 3% believe that sending non-violent non-sexual offenders to treatment programs rather than prisons would make Texas not safe at all

- **When one considers that it costs approximately \$16,000 to house a non-violent offender in prison for one year, a reduction in the number of non-violent prisoners held within Texas prisons and jails could potentially allow the state an opportunity to save funds and apply them in other areas. This proposal is strengthened by the additional fact that the state saves from two to four dollars on incarceration costs for every one dollar spent when it sends non-violent offenders to treatment programs instead of prison, a potential savings of between \$8,000 and \$12,000 each year for every non-violent offender.**

In consideration of these costs, the majority (95%) of survey respondents believe that dollars currently spent on non-violent offenders should be redirected towards treatment, with the savings used in other ways:

- 48% believe that instead of incarceration, money should be spent on treatment and the savings should be used for education
 - 36% believe that instead of incarceration, money should be spent on treatment and the savings should be used to make more treatment programs available
 - 11% believe that instead of incarceration, money should be spent on treatment and the savings should be used for other purposes
 - 5% believe that money should continue to be spent on housing non-violent offenders in prisons
-
- **With the Texas Department of Criminal Justice overseeing approximately 150,000 individuals in prison and more than 600,000 individuals on probation or parole, it was perceived as relatively counterintuitive to respondents for the Texas Legislature to allocate 90% of its criminal justice budget towards housing prisoners in correctional facilities and only 10% on probation, parole, and treatment for prisoners.**

When asked what percentage of Texas' 2.5 billion dollar criminal justice budget they think should be allocated towards prisons and what percentage should be allocated towards probation, parole, and treatment, the majority (94%) of survey respondents want additional money to be directed to probation, parole, and treatment:

- 45% want 70% of the criminal justice budget to be directed towards prisons and 30% directed towards probation, parole, and treatment.
- 33% want 50% of the criminal justice budget to be directed towards prisons and 50% directed towards probation, parole, and treatment

- 12% want 30% of the criminal justice budget to be directed towards prisons and 70% directed towards probation, parole, and treatment
- 6% want 90% of the criminal justice budget to be directed towards prisons and 10% directed towards probation, parole, and treatment
- 5% want 10% of the criminal justice budget to be directed towards prisons and 90% directed towards probation, parole, and treatment

- **In terms of re-entry, survey respondents were provided with the information that approximately 95% of prisoners will re-enter the free community during their natural lives after they have served their prison term requirements, and many will have parole or probation officers whose job performance is NOT measured in terms of the successful transition of these individuals into society (that is to say that evaluations of parole and probation officers' job performance does not depend on whether the former prisoners under their supervision obtain and hold a job, financially support their family if required, or maintain adequate housing).**

When asked if parole and probation officers' job performance (i.e., pay raises, promotions, etc.) should be based on the successful re-entry of parolees and probationers happening under the officers' supervision, the majority of survey respondents want to see this policy change:

- 68% want parole and probation officers' job performance to hinge on the successful re-entry of the individuals they oversee
- 32% do not want parole and probation officers' job performance to hinge on the successful re-entry of the individuals they oversee

- **Survey Part 3: Employment**

Despite the generally altruistic recommendations of most survey respondents to positively impact the conditions of inmates, their response to a series of questions relating the hiring of formerly convicted individuals revealed a definite unwillingness to hire. Although most respondents answered that they would need to evaluate these scenarios on a case-by-case basis, the remainder were hesitant to assert a great degree of willingness to hire individuals convicted for drug possession, drug distribution, or violent crime.

- **When respondents were positioned in the vantage point of an employer and asked how willing s/he would be to hire an adult with a felony conviction for drug possession, most would evaluate each applicant individually:**

- 36% were either somewhat or very willing to hire a person with this type of background
- 13% were not very willing
- 5% were not willing at all
- 46% would evaluate these scenarios on a case-by-case basis

- **When respondents were positioned in the vantage point of an employer and asked how willing s/he would be to hire an adult with a felony conviction for drug distribution, most would evaluate each applicant individually:**

- 21% were either somewhat or very willing to hire a person with this type of background
- 24% were not very willing
- 16% were not willing at all
- 39% would evaluate these scenarios on a case-by-case basis (right?)

➤ **When respondents were positioned in the vantage point of an employer and asked how willing s/he would be to hire an adult with a felony conviction for a violent crime, most would be unwilling:**

- 9% were either somewhat or very willing to hire a person with this type of background
- 25% were not very willing
- 35% were not willing at all
- 31% would evaluate these scenarios on a case-by-case basis (right?)

Interestingly, it appears that the general public has a significant willingness to employ individuals convicted for drug possession in contrast to drug distribution and especially violent crime.

• **Summary**

In summary, the majority of this diverse pool of survey respondents believe the following:

- ◆ The primary purpose TDCJ is reintegrating offenders into society through rehabilitation (35%), compared to punishment of a person through confinement (9%).
- ◆ Non-violent drug users should be put in programs outside of prison walls to prevent them from committing a drug-related crime again (96%).
- ◆ Dollars currently spent on incarcerating non-violent offenders should be redirected towards treatment, with the savings used in other ways, such as education and treatment (95%).
- ◆ Probation, parole, and treatment programs should be allocated more criminal justice budget dollars than they are currently getting (94%).
- ◆ Parole and probation officers' job pay raises and promotions should hinge on the successful re-entry of the individuals they oversee (68%).
- ◆ TDCJ should notify families of the incarcerated prior to visitation of the potential unavailability of the prisoner (80%), and should provide more family counseling services (66%).
- ◆ TDCJ should provide counseling for children with incarcerated parent(s) to better prevent these youth from entering prison (87%), should provide children with incarcerated parent(s) access to tutoring programs to increase their educational success (75%), and should allow for additional parent-child contact through increased visitation time (51%).
- ◆ Texas should spend more money on increasing high school graduation rates in order to reduce the number of people entering prison (87%).
- ◆ TDCJ should change its policies related to visitation (57%), with families and friends having increased visitation privileges.
- ◆ TDCJ should change its policies related to what prisoners should have direct access to through the mail (65%), especially with regards to books, newspapers, and magazines.

- ◆ TDCJ should uphold its policies related to prisoners' access ball games and weightlifting (56%), and its policies related to prisoners' access to television sets (50%).
- ◆ TDCJ should change its policies related to amenities (69%), with prisoners having more access to table games, reading, artwork, and leatherwork.
- ◆ Respondents would be more willing to employ individuals convicted for drug possession than drug distribution and especially violent crime.

In the following section, the findings derived from the comparisons of key subgroups are discussed to illuminate how opinions varied or remained universal across survey participants.

COMPARISONS BETWEEN GROUPS

Significant findings⁶ emerged within the comparison of five subgroups defined by (1) gender, (2) race, (3) income, (4) education, and (5) relationship to the incarcerated. In the overwhelming majority of questions posed to participants, there were minimal discrepancies in the response patterns between females and males. Yet, in four areas, their beliefs significantly varied:

- ◆ Females were more likely than males to believe that prisoners should have more access to basketball, handball, volleyball, and weightlifting in gymnasiums or outdoor recreation yards.
- ◆ Males were more likely than females to believe that there would be no impact on the number of people entering prison if Texas increased the amount of funding directed towards high school graduation rates.
- ◆ When asked what they would do if they were given the responsibility of spending criminal justice funds, females and males ranked as their first priority the spending of additional funds for treatment programs outside of prison walls and as their last priority the spending of funds for the construction of more prisons, but females were statistically more likely than males to rank these as their first and last priorities, respectively.
- ◆ Males were more likely than females to be 'very willing' to hire an adult with a felony conviction for drug distribution.

As with males and females, there were mostly commonalities among the responses from Non-White and White respondents. However, in two areas within this subgroup, their beliefs significantly varied:

- ◆ Non-White respondents were more likely than White respondents to express that families and friends should have increased opportunities to visit prisoners and that more family members and friends should be allowed during these visitations.
- ◆ When asked what they would do if they were given the responsibility of spending criminal justice funds, Non-Whites and Whites ranked as their first priority the spending of additional funds for educational programs for prisoners and as their last priority the spending of funds for the construction of more prisons, but Non-Whites were statistically more likely than Whites to rank these as their first and last priorities, respectively.

⁶ Note: Significance was determined if $p < .10$.

Self-reported income was also a variable used to provide constructive comparisons. Two groups were defined in this sector – individuals with an annual income of \$45,000 or less, and individuals with an annual income of \$45,000 or more – and in three areas, their beliefs significantly varied:

- ◆ Individuals with an annual income greater than \$45,000 were more likely to believe that prisoners should have more access to table games (e.g., checkers and dominoes), reading, artwork, and leatherwork in the library and craft shops.
- ◆ When asked what they would do if they were given the responsibility of spending criminal justice funds, individuals with an annual income greater than \$45,000 were more likely than their counterparts to rank as their first priority the spending of additional funds for probation.
- ◆ When asked what they would do if they were given the responsibility of spending criminal justice funds, individuals with an annual income less than \$45,000 were more likely than their counterparts to rank as their first priority the spending of additional funds for educational programs for prisoners.

Educational attainment was a variable similarly used to provide helpful comparisons. Two groups were defined in this sector – individuals with less than a college degree, and individuals with at least a college degree – and in three areas, their beliefs significantly varied:

- ◆ When asked what they would do if they were given the responsibility of spending criminal justice funds, individuals with less than a college degree were more likely than their counterparts to rank as their first priority the spending of additional funds for training for prison staff members and administrators. The last ranked priority could not be determined with any statistical significance.
- ◆ When asked what they would do if they were given the responsibility of spending criminal justice funds, individuals with at least a college degree were more likely than their counterparts to rank as their first priority the spending of additional funds for more treatment programs outside of prison walls. The last ranked priority could not be determined with any statistical significance.
- ◆ Individuals with less than a college degree were more likely than their counterparts to be ‘not willing at all’ to hire an adult with a felony conviction for a violent crime.

Last, survey participants’ exposure to the prison system was used to provide comparisons. Two groups were defined in this sector – individuals who have had no exposure to the prison system, and individuals who have exposure to the prison systems due to their relationships with a family member or friend in prison – and in two areas, their beliefs significantly varied:

- ◆ Individuals with exposure to the prison system were more likely to assert that treatment programs would prevent a non-violent drug user from committing a drug-related crime again, while individuals without exposure to the prison system were more likely to assert that their regular reporting to a probation officer would prevent a non-violent drug user from committing a drug-related crime again.
- ◆ When asked what they would do if they were given the responsibility of spending criminal justice funds, individuals without exposure to the prison system and their counterparts ranked as their first priority the spending of additional funds for educational programs for prisoners, but individuals without exposure to the prison system were statistically more likely than their counterparts to rank this as their first priority. The last ranked priority could not be determined with any statistical significance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most respondents of TCJC's online survey view rehabilitation as the primary purpose of TDCJ. The vast majority also feels that non-violent drug offenders would best be benefited by programs outside of prison walls rather than by prison, and they agree that additional funding should be directed towards such rehabilitation and probation programs.

Based on these findings, the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition makes the following major recommendations to the Sunset Advisory Commission, the Texas Legislature, and organizations that focus their work on issues related to Texas' incarcerated population:

- (1) Assess Evidence-Based Treatment Programs.** Given the readiness of Texans to fund alternatives to incarceration, it is necessary to begin a comprehensive search, review, and analysis of proven treatment programs that yield the best results, in coordination with an analysis of how probation differs from drug rehabilitation.
 - **Focus on Programs that Reduce Crime.** Evidence-based treatment programs are an effective means for reducing crime. According to a study by the state's Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council, offenders who receive appropriate treatment are four times less likely to return to prison than those who do not. Moreover, a study by the United States Department of Justice's National Corrections Institute found that "tough on crime" penalties actually result in a slight *increase* in an individual's inclination toward criminal activity. On the other hand, treatment and programs, such as cognitive skills training, result in a 15–29% decrease in an individual's criminal behavior.⁷
 - **View Probation and Drug Treatment Separately.** Oftentimes, an individual's addiction to drugs causes their criminal activity (such as theft), as they require funds to feed their addiction. This individual's problems can be addressed in two ways: (1) through drug treatment, or (2) through probation. Drug treatment will best get to the root of the criminal activity because it will address the physiological impact of the substance on the addict and help in putting an end to the need for criminal activity spurred by the addiction. Probation will help determine if the drug treatment program is truly working for that individual. For instance, if an offender on probation produces a urine analysis that tests positive for a particular drug, his/her probation officer will be able to verify that the offender's particular treatment program is not working. This should not be a cause for probation revocation (as committing another crime, like theft, would be). Not all treatment programs work for every type of addiction, and on average, an addict relapses three times before proper treatment. If an individual is punished with probation revocation for failure to stop his/her illness, s/he will ultimately reenter society with the continuing need to make poor and illegal life decisions. Judges should be given tools besides revocations to deal with probationers poor decisions that fall short of new crimes, and instead reserve prison space for those who are a real threat to public safety.
 - **Invest in Programs that will Yield Real Returns.** Texas' community supervision resources are stretched to the limit. The stress created by overburdening probation officers with non-violent offenders can ultimately allow higher risk probationers to slip through the cracks. This is something that we cannot afford – from both a financial and a public safety perspective. Texas should change this ongoing practice by investing in programs (such as drug treatment programs, as mentioned above) that could pull as many as half of our probationers out of the criminal justice system and put them on the road to becoming productive citizens.

⁷ Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections; reported by Minnesota Judge and scholar Dennis Challeen.

(2) Aid Families of the Incarcerated. Both TDCJ and the Texas Legislature should make policy changes that recognize the importance of family in the rehabilitative and reentry process.

- **Assess Family Impact.** Quantitative and qualitative research on the impact of parental incarceration on children and on other members of the immediate family is needed. This research should address the effect of the geographic distance between the child and parent in prison, especially with regards to family visitation, when prisons are located in remote, rural locations.
- **Change TDCJ Policy.** TDCJ should review its regulations in regards to mail, phone calls, and visitation to ensure that they are family-friendly and do not have a negative impact on incarcerated parents' efforts to maintain family relationships and to retain custody of their children. TDCJ should also implement parent-child visiting programs that will allow parents to spend an extended amount of time with their child on site at the prison. Lastly, TDCJ should re-train corrections administrators to sensitize them to family issues.
- **Change State Policy.** Texas should provide mentoring programs for children of the incarcerated to boost their educational level and help prevent criminal activity and entry into the system, as well as provide support groups for caregivers of incarcerated children, and for the children and incarcerated parents themselves.

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Although the cost of the development of more treatment and education programs are perhaps the greatest difficulties of actualizing survey respondents' collective recommendations, the potential benefits of gaining greater public support based on faith in an evolving Texas criminal justice system should be of chief consideration.

APPENDIX A: COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS ON PRELIMINARY SUNSET LIST OF ISSUES

The following are written comments from survey respondents that fit the preliminary issue list distributed by the Sunset Advisory Commission staff.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

1. How effective are TDCJ's offender incarceration, rehabilitation, educational and re-entry programs? What changes, if any, should be made to improve them?

INCARCERATION

INCARCERATION AS A POLICY; ITS PURPOSE

- (1) The mindset in administrative thinking changed (or was vindicated) when the name changed from 'TX Dept of Corrections (TDC)' to 'TX Dept of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)'.
- (2) There is much research showing that coercive punishment is not effective. Law and policy makers need to be educated on the effective methods of rehabilitation and correction.
- (3) I am definitely astounded that so much of the budget for this system (90%) goes towards prisons while the rest goes towards programs for potential/former prisoners. Much of the money for prisons should be allocated to programs; this would most likely lower the number of prisoners, save money spent on prison facilities, and create more productive members of society.
- (4) Long sentences are counter-productive, insure an inmate won't successfully reenter society.
- (5) I believe Sunset for the Texas Criminal Justice system is a great opportunity to move beyond the narrow 'lock 'em up' mentality. It is in the best interest of all Texans to spend less on prison walls and more on prison programs and prevention. Even from a pragmatic perspective, most prisoners return to society and we should want them healthier, more productive and able to make better decisions.
- (6) I believe the TDCJ should really focus on how the people act inside of the prison. There is no point in holding a person there if they do not harm anybody there or have any behavioral problems. It should really focus on case-by-case situations and not one flat law. There are some people there that are being held for the sake of completing time, when they could be out and spending time with family. I understand hard criminals need to be kept inside the prison, but if a person really is no threat even in the prison and has no signs that they would harm anybody in society, then what is the point of keeping that family member away? It causes the most pain and suffering to the children. It is very hard for us to fight the law and have judges and lawyers listen to us. It may be more effective if security officers inside the prison could speak up on behalf of the prisoners and give their opinions. They are the ones that spend the most time with them, not the judge.
- (7) There are really only four reasons to send people to prison: (1) Protect truly dangerous people from the public (a small percentage) (2) To deter crime (3) to rehabilitate an offender and (4) for punishment. Item (4) provides the least value to society yet is the one that gets the most focus because of its political value. Item (2) above provides the most value to society in the long run but gets the least amount of focus and attention. Please, let's make some rational sense out what we use prison for. There is a place and purpose for prison, but let's get the priorities straight.
- (8) Concentrate on punishment and deterrence.
- (9) Curb on building new prisons; curb or elimination of private prisons or at least greater training and supervision of any private prisons.
- (10) Has become so lenient that offenders are not held being held accountable. All TDCJ seems to be interested in is releasing offenders from prison, probation and parole.
- (11) Many people just get 'caught up' in crime due to environment or situation. However, there are many

who just think in a cruel and criminal manner. They see everyone else as exploitable resources. I think these inmates are the main reasons for prisons.

- (12) Fund research programs that reduce the overall rate of crime for the entire population.
- (13) I believe we need to start working with our criminals rather than just either housing them or ignoring them.
- (14) Punishment does not work in the long run. We should care about the long run, because it impacts our entire system.
- (15) Too many prisons; too many prisoners.
- (16) People need to be punished first and rehabilitated second that's why so many prisoner return to prison if they really don't like it they will not go back.
- (17) Less prisons.
- (18) Due to my experience and knowledge of the justice system and the sociology of the matter, I feel like it is fairly apparent that something is not working. The rates of recidivism are just too high for one to believe that imprisoning a criminal, violent or non-violent, in the current fashion is NOT WORKING.
- (19) The predominant focus on punishment for crimes committed, rather than addressing the underlying cause or social situations which engender criminal activity, misdirects the justice system from its fundamental goal: reduction of crime. Overcrowding of jails is indicative of this attitude, and is potentially, if not already, detrimental to both convicts and the system as a whole. Alcohol and drug-related crimes are especially approached irrationally, as if not the effects aforementioned regarding incarceration implemented, they amount to a slew of monetary losses which may simply serve to augment the original problem.
- (20) The less incarceration the better. Communities need to be built, not torn apart.
- (21) It is just too easy to be moved to a lower classification level, but almost impossible to move up the levels.
- (22) Reduce the over crowding.
- (23) This system with the second highest number of incarcerated people in this country does what it is designed to do, punish prisoners and keep them from society.
- (24) Get rid of 'boot camps', they increase the chance of recidivism.
- (25) Like many other CJ systems, the Texas system is in need of major overhaul. Having the 2nd largest CJ system in the country is no badge of honor. Locking people up and throwing away the key is not the solution to reducing criminal behavior.
- (26) Inmates should be evaluated on a case by case basis (there are good people who get into bad situations). There should be an evaluation process for the way guards treat inmates. If you are a repeat offender you should get less privileges (especially drug offenders).
- (27) I think you need to seriously think about what the purpose of the criminal justice system is at the very core. The purpose of government is to protect the private property rights of individuals. Those who abridge others property rights, whether violently OR non-violently, must pay back their victim accordingly. Strict punishment (but not abuse) is a deterrent to crime, as it will provide incentive for potential and former criminals to not commit crimes in the first place.
- (28) Increased spending by the legislature for prison construction is a must. This would eliminate all the crazy reactions by the legislature which doesn't understand the need for incarceration, and is willing to turn the sentencing structure and community supervision we currently have on their heads to save dollars up front when addressing criminal justice issues.

DO NOT INCARCERATE NONVIOLENT OFFENDERS, OR INCARCERATE THEM FOR SHORTER PERIODS OF TIME THAN VIOLENT OFFENDERS

- (1) The jailing of non-violent offenders is abysmal, shameful, and fiscally irresponsible.
- (2) People who commit non-violent or white collar crimes should stay out of prison to work and pay off their debt to their victims. If they fail to do that then they should spend their full sentence.
- (3) I think a prison system should seek to separate levels of criminals (e.g. violent unprovoked, from drug dealers, from multiple felons, from rapists).

- (4) I believe too much space is taken up in prisons by non-violent, especially drug related prisoners, their crimes aren't as severe as some who actually need to be in prison. More money could be saved, and more time allocated for the quality of the Criminal Justice System if these individuals were required to undergo less severe punishments.
- (5) As a taxpayer, I'm disgusted with how much money we spend in Texas to incarcerate non-violent drug offenders – especially since these offenders, instead of getting treatment, STILL have access to drugs inside prison walls.
- (6) We all know that sending a non-violent person to prison just makes them a better criminal.
- (7) More focus should be brought to non-violent offenders. Drug offenders can be rehabilitated in a drug-treatment program (not in a prison). Putting these offenders (often young) in prison gives them access to names & numbers of people who sells drugs on the outside; when they get out, they know where to go to buy drugs. They end up back in prison with a longer sentence.
- (8) We need to quit locking up non-violent offenders and turning them into felons. the most serious issue is non violent drug offenders, makes absolutely no sense to turn them into felons, we mark them for life and give them very little chance at a decent life by making them felons.
- (9) I would say that it seems our prison system has been overcrowded--due much in part by non-violent drug offenses. it seems clear that sending these people to prison only hardens them and makes them less likely to be a contributing member of society upon release.
- (10) Sexual and violent offenders should not generally be housed with nonviolent offenders. By concentrating all those criminals in one place, the system is making them worse and worse, while we need to try and make them better.
- (11) It seems like a terrific waste of time and money to incarcerate non-violent drug offenders. From what I've seen, it seems to just encourage further drug use.
- (12) The Texas Criminal Justice system is spending too much money incarcerating individuals charged with nonviolent offenses. I have no doubt that spending a significant amount of time in jail can undoubtedly change a person, and not in a positive manner. It seems there is little effort made to rehabilitate these offenders. In our rush to punish them, we're creating real criminals and ruining lives.
- (13) It is counter-productive to place non-violent offenders in prisons where they can become acculturated as criminals.
- (14) We regularly imprison non-violent offenders because there are no community resources for alternative sanctions. They return from prison worse. Our policy of locking up more offenders for longer terms is making the problem of public safety get worse.
- (15) More alternate sentencing needs to be used focusing on treatment instead of incarceration for the non-violent offenders. Prisons make people worse.
- (16) Do not incarcerate non-violent criminals, just monitor them closely.
- (17) Building Prisons is BIG BUSINESS in Texas. As Texans and Responsible Citizens, we need to address prison reform, or just let them build a Barbed Wire fence around Texas. Every time we incarcerate a Non-Violent Offender we put a family in crisis. We have now created a Third Class 'Underclass,' that 'Couch Surfs' (lives with family, friends, or predatory individuals to survive).
- (18) We need to get non-violent offenders out of jail NOW. Prison is hell, an inhuman environment that largely corrupts and desecrates those associated with it.
- (19) We are wasting too much money housing non-violent, non-sexual offenders.
- (20) Way too many people are in the system for non-violent, non-sexual offenses.
- (21) Prison should be for the really bad and violent.
- (22) We should definitely avoid imprisoning non-violent drug offenders; it turns them into hardened criminals in the end.
- (23) I think societal mentality right now (and TCJS) is to lock people up and throw away the key. I think for violent criminals and sexual predators this mind set is appropriate. I also think there should be a clear distinction between a violent crime and other types of criminal behavior. Violent criminals should be kept longer (and in many cases forever) than someone with non-violent charges.
- (24) The prisons are crowded and think a lot of non-violent, first-time offenders like drug possession or shop lifting may be too severely punished and prisons would be less crowded if such offenses were not incarcerated.

- (25) I believe we should focus on violent and sexual criminals rather than on nonviolent (especially drug possession) criminals.
- (26) Too many non violent offenders placed in prison.
- (27) Violent offenders should continue to be held in prison to protect the general public.
- (28) The TDCJ should not operate as a corporation operates: it should not be concerned with needless increases in funding and operations breadth (more prisons, stricter laws). Instead it should operate as something more like a charity, not to say that it should give money away, simply in the benevolence of its nature, the TDCJ should be more concentrated on punishing violent criminals and people that actually are a threat to society. And finally: it should be the goal of the TDCJ to incarcerate fewer prisoners, to be building fewer prisons, to really make a positive impact on our society via PRO-ACTIVE methods, rather than REACTIONARY ones. This would of course require changes in legislation, etc. but you people are in the best position to do something.
- (29) I don't want tax dollars spent housing 'pot heads,' violent criminals need reform not casual drug addict.
- (30) Work seriously with violent criminals and don't release them back into the population without serious and considerable supervision and monitoring.
- (31) Stop wasting money on imprisoning kids with marijuana charges and focus more on getting sex offenders of the street.
- (32) I think it's virtually impossible to have people be successful when they come out of prison. We do need to keep violent offenders and repeat sex offenders in for a very long time!
- (33) More prisons, longer sentences, are needed for violent criminals. Never let them return to society, never let them return to their families to influence their children.
- (34) I think there are more criminals for lesser crimes that are in prison, when there should be more space for worse criminals (violent or sex-offenders).
- (35) I'd definitely like to see fewer people in prison. I think prison should be a last resort for people who are truly dangerous - serial rapists, murderers - people who won't stop being violent. To me, that's the purpose of prisons: protection only.
- (36) If we continue to lock Texans up at the current rate, we will only have persons from other states to run the prisons. We need to get smart about how we treat non-violent, nonsexual offenders; who among us has not had a problem of some sort!
- (37) In general, I think that more time and money should be spent protecting us from sex offenders and violent criminals than on prosecuting non-violent drug offenders.
- (38) Incarceration is a waste of resources for non-violent offenders. The same money could be spent much better in a different environment with better results.
- (39) We should lock people up because we are AFRAID of them, not because we are MAD at them. Keep the violent offenders away from society.
- (40) Most people should be gotten out of prison fast, before they become institutionalized; only the violent should stay in.
- (41) Non-violent crimes that do not result in loss of life should not be imprisoned.
- (42) Use prison space for violent offenders.
- (43) I think prisons are extremely expensive and should be reserved for those who pose a danger to the general public (i.e.: very violent people, sex offenders).
- (44) Prison should be for those who represent a continuing threat to public safety.
- (45) I feel we focus far too much on incarceration as a way to solve all of our justice problems, and with the continued focus on non-violent drug users as criminals and with the new found focus of criminalizing illegal immigration it seems unlikely that we will get away from this model anytime soon, which is unfortunate.
- (46) It is my opinion prisons need to be reserved for violent offenders especially those with a history of violent offenses.
- (47) The emphasis of the criminal justice system should be on protecting the public from violent criminals. This is difficult to do if the prisons are full of people convicted of drug possession (without intent to distribute). I am personally much more concerned about encountering a person convicted of child molestation, rape, murder, armed robbery, etc. than someone who was caught with a couple of

ounces of pot in their glove box. Educate the public on the importance of prisons in protecting them and their families to encourage more public support for the system.

- (48) Minor felonies and drug possessions crowd our prison systems. There should always be places open for sex offenders, violent criminals, and higher drug dealers.
- (49) Spend less on those in prison, keep less violent offenders in prison.
- (50) It costs too much to send non-violent criminals to jail. We need to only send violent criminals to jail.
- (51) Dangerous, violent criminals and sex offenders should be incarcerated, and society should be protected from them. (Particularly people who have committed sex crimes against children should never be allowed to return to society).
- (52) Incarcerating non-violent offenders is a waste of taxpayer money.
- (53) Drugs, gambling, and prostitution are what I consider to be victimless crimes. I prefer not to have my tax dollars enforcing current laws in these areas and incarcerating those convicted of victimless crimes.
- (54) More maximum security for the heavy offender, like the sex offender, the killer and child molester.
- (55) Focus on meaningful crimes that actually put the public in danger instead of stupid minor crimes, such as a PI you can get in your own damn home if you open the door when a cop knocks on it, or in a goddamn bar. If that is not an incentive to not cooperate with the police, then what is? At worst, handle crimes like that outside of the courts like speeding violations, and just write tickets. This saves everyone time and money.
- (56) Keep the social-psychopaths in maximum security; all others in alternative treatment programs or trustee camp type detention.

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- Some non-violent offenders need to be in prison. I feel that more prisons should be built since public safety is being swept under the rug far too many times.
 - In regards to incarceration vs. treatment for non-violent offenders- while I am unaware of the actual statistics, I wonder how many have either committed violent crimes before they were charged or how many will easily commit a violent crime in the future that treatment alone will not deter.
 - Non-violent offenders as bad as violent.

SEPARATE PRISONERS ACCORDING TO OFFENSE

- (1) In no way, shape, or fashion should non-violent offenders be housed with violent offenders.
- (2) Non-violent, non-sexual offenders should not be in the same prisons with the violent sexual offenders.
- (3) Classification to separate less violent/ lower security risk inmates from more dangerous on facility-wide basis could be good environment for education/treatment/vocational-transition to work pilot programs.
- (4) Non violent offenders will learn to be violent if incarcerated with violent offenders. They should be separate.
- (5) State jails have not met the expectations of their creation. Many offenders have been incarcerated in federal and other T.D.C. units and then commit state jail offenses. They are housed with young offenders with lower level offenses. This leads way too often to rape, extortion, and other unsavory occurrences. I believe it is time for major reform.
- (6) I hope that the prison system will continue to differentiate more and more between their different types of prisoners, and treat them accordingly.
- (7) There needs to be a better separation between violent and non-violent offenders.
- (8) I think that the non violent youth that incarcerated should be mentored and set apart from older prisoners.
- (9) Sexual and violent offenders should not generally be housed with nonviolent offenders.
- (10) I think the main purpose of the Texas Criminal Justice System should be to rehabilitate those

individuals who have committed non-violent crimes. These individuals should not be mixed with violent criminals in prisons, since the nature of their crimes differ greatly.

- (11) I believe non-violent criminals who are incarcerated will become worse individuals by staying in such close contact with rapists, murderers and child molesters. I would rather see a pot head set free than a pot head turned into a violent criminal.
- (12) I would strongly favor the separation of aggressive or violent inmates.
- (13) Separate those with violent propensities.
- (14) Non-violent offenders need treatment separately from violent offenders.
- (15) Prisons seem to take minor offenders and teach them how to better commit bigger crimes through exposure to 'bigger' criminals. A more effective classification method of prisoners, and using that method to keep the light offenders away from the heavy ones may help.
- (16) Violent crimes and sex offenses deserve focus in prison while drugs and nonviolent crimes should be separated.
- (17) Exercise more control over the violent criminals and rapists.
- (18) As a mother of 5 and PhD student in parent child health, I hold a fair amount of expertise in human development. It is my belief young people/ adolescents up to age 25 do not belong incarcerated with adult felons. The age range of American adolescence has changed in our culture. Exposure to adult felons is inappropriate during this formative period of life. Particularly due to the 95% reentry rate of all prisoners, this practice of non age specific incarceration cannot be ultimately good for the safety, health and well beings of all Texans, including those who are incarcerated at such a young age.
- (19) I wouldn't suggest for instance a multiple felon with gang relations be allowed to share any space with anyone really, until sufficient psychiatric data had been collected (a day or so), and even then they should not be allowed around certain other types of offenders, for example, a drug runner from a 'lower echelon' where the two may be tempted to form a criminal type union. I think relationships in general should be heavily monitored and evaluated as well as intelligently approached.

PRISONER MISTREATMENT AND ABUSE BY GUARDS

- (1) Though we have good law enforcement, there are those officers that use their uniform to inflict pain and anguish on decent people like myself who have never done anything wrong and are so unbelievably square, that it becomes blatantly obvious of the corruption. More vigilance of the personnel that are officers and jailers is strongly recommended.
- (2) I went in for 3 years, had a wonderful growing class. Called 1 mother because her son was sent to the hospital, bleeding internally. His mother had not been notified. I was barred from ever going in again- they said I was too close to my guys. They do not want anyone to care about the guys - it is a cold morgue type place and I am not surprised that many come out more like a beast, than a person. They have a survival mentality and do not know how to meet or greet the free world. Cold & unfeeling.
- (3) Most of the Caregivers in the system have an attitude that they think they are so much better and above the inmates and they produce nothing but NEGATIVITY. How can a person come out and survive without being lift up instead of shot down?
- (4) They are there to oversee prisoners while they are in their charge. The prisoners are human beings after all and deserve to be treated as such. The USA is NOT a third world country yet many of our prisons are worse than any one should have to live in. They are already locked away for their crime, but that doesn't mean they have to suffer at the hands of those who oversee them, or a state whose mentality seems to have become 'lock 'em up and throw away the key!'
- (5) They are extremely biased with family members who make an honest mistake. They do NOT believe the truth when they WANT to believe otherwise and nothing the person says will change their mind. The inmates are treated as less than human, subjected to wrongful treatment by guards and administration rank. Sexual assault by guards is covered up and no action taken by admin to see that the guard is removed of his job or charges brought against him. Some Guards and Rank are of the mind set that it is their duty to pass out punishment to the inmates. Thus you have the 'Good Ole Boy System of punishment' and it is perpetrated on and on. The good guards are thus forced to 'Look

the Other Way and KEEP their mouths shut!' or lose their jobs. False cases and charges are brought against certain inmates and they have no way of proving their innocence. Case in point....being gang tagged! Those that are innocent have no way of refuting the charge, and are NOT ALLOWED to know who said they were a gang member. Nor are they allowed to see the paper work at any point in the process.

- (6) THE TREATMENT OF THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED IS UNJUST. MOST OF THE STAFF THAT WE HAVE DEALT WITH ARE INHUMANE AND CRUEL. FEW ARE AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE.
- (7) The majority people that work for TDCJ should be on the other side of the fence, it unbelievable what goes on in the prison system if people really knew they would be SHOCKED what they do to inmates and each other.
- (8) There are too many Ranking Officers whose power tactics have little interest in true justice/correction and too much good-ol-boy cover up of 'official' actions rendered against inmates in disciplinary cases. There are also many good men/women officials who do try to do what's right and carry out what's in the interest of both the prisoner and the public, however they seem to be fewer and farther between...
- (9) I have seen guards beat people severely when the situation was totally uncalled for. It was done primarily for the 'entertainment' of the guards. Texas prisons, as well as the parole system are in need of great reform measures. Scott R. Portnoy
- (10) Our current system of 'criminal justice' is a huge failure. All it really does is breed recidivism and facilitate the petty criminalities of prison staff through bribes.
- (11) Degree to which visitors are treated with dignity varies too widely from facility-to-facility.
- (12) Hard to improve such a huge system, but what is needed is more decency and accountability. Many on staff are dumb, dismissive, or downright mean to inmates, families, and friends.
- (13) Grace and compassion should not be limited to the 'good' people.
- (14) I could write a tome about how the CJS does the opposite from what would be effective in reducing crime. Understanding respect is the key ingredient.
- (15) The conditions for the prisoners should be made better, at least humane and tolerable. Prisoners are thee to pay their debt to society and be rehabilitated. It's not in the guard's job description to be mean, cruel, or inflict punishment beyond reason. These are some things I think really need to be improved. So many other states have better prison systems, and although I love this state, this system really stinks right now!
- (16) I feel that deep and intense psychological testing should be performed on anyone who wishes to serve as a prison guard. Remember and reflect on the fact that the Abu Ghraib prisoner abusers WERE PRISON GUARDS IN PRIVATE LIFE.
- (17) By treating prisoners with more dignity and respect (allowing them more personal items and freedoms - with the exception of weights), and by better training AND PAYING the corrections officers, a less hostile and more rehabilitative environment can be created, resulting in people better prepared emotionally to re-enter society.
- (18) Need to allow more volunteers in and treat them with better respect.
- (19) The system in place now does not work! People tend to come out in worse shape than they go in. The people who are hired for the positions in prisons are people who probably could not work for anyone else.
- (20) TDCJ is one of the most corrupt agencies I have ever known. Prisoners are treated like objects by guards, because guards are treated that way by managers, because managers are treated that way by upper level supervisors. It is that way in ID and Parole. Ethics in this agency are non-existent. EEO violations are a way of life. People have relatives working for them, jobs promised to them when qualified applicants are ignored. Good ol'Buddy system is alive and well. Morale in the agency is at an all time low. There is no loyalty because the agency gives none.
- (21) TDCJ focuses on retribution and deprivation rather than rehabilitation and public safety. Guards are allowed to be cruel and inhumane, in big things such as roughing up prisoners and small things such as making inmates leave the dining hall after only 5 minutes to eat. Guards have the power and use the power to humiliate and degrade prisoners by name calling, discarding personal items during

lockdowns. Inmate safety on the job or in the living quarters is only addressed if someone outside the system raises a ruckus.

- (22) Prisoners are often mistreated by officials in the prison system.
- (23) Stop abusing inmates!
- (24) Sometimes I fear that prisoners are routinely subjected to violence by guards and by other inmates. I think that creating a safe atmosphere for prisoners should be a primary concern of any prison facility, and I would strongly favor stricter regulations concerning the treatment of prisoners by guards, and the separation of aggressive or violent inmates.
- (25) The inmate that starts trouble should be punished not the inmate attacked, honesty - I've personally had guards and wardens lie to me on the phone (warden brown). It is a sad note that many of the guards involved in the Abu Ghraib scandal got their training as guards in a state prison system. Thank you.
- (26) Too much contraband coming in through staff.
- (27) Prisoner should be better protected. I saw guards allow rapes and horrible beatings. The upper level administrators just try to cover everything up. Terrible injustices are done to prisoners in TDCJ. Only the most horrible prisoners might be deserving of such inhumane treatment. Texas should be ashamed.
- (28) It is the biggest waste of taxpayer money and human resources ever conceived. It is obsolete. It is inhumane. It does more harm than good. It encourages unethical behavior from those in power.
- (29) When Correctional officers can abuse offenders and get a way with it regularly, then you are just making sure some one else will get hurt.
- (30) It is my experience that the hatred and oppression of the prison guards is very much a part of the recurring incarceration of inmates. The Estelle Unit is particularly bad about allowing the guards to curse the inmates, call them names, refuse to allow them access to commissary and to disallow them access to areas for which they have a lay-in. In my opinion, this oppression is one of the major players in recidivism.
- (31) It is the biggest waste of taxpayer money and human resources ever conceived. It is obsolete. It is inhumane. It does more harm than good. It encourages unethical behavior from those in power.
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- (34) It is a well-known fact that our Texas prisons are breeding cages for criminals. Treated inhumanely, confined to very small quarters, very little contact with loved ones and perhaps physical abuse by officers as well as other inmates, and many of these individuals are bound to develop emotional and mental issues which increases their rate of reoffending.
- (35) The Texas Criminal Justice System needs immediate attention and reform - it is a system of vengeance and hatred for our prisoners. They are mistreating our family members and also they are in inhumane prisons with no contact with other prisoners for recreation, no educational opportunities, no churches for them inside allowed, inadequate medical attention, and brutal behavior on the part of the men who work there.
- (36) What exists is a false impression that there is some hope for those victimized by this corrupt and vicious, insupportable, dehumanizing and inhumane man-eating machine. Throw out the whole shameful mess, and begin again with a new heart. None of us thinks that constant barrages of criticism, fear, violence, brutality, verbal and mental abuse, under-nourishment, exposure to extremes of heat and cold, inadequate clothing and bedding, lack of access to fresh air, sunshine, exercise, communication with loved ones, sensory deprivation of every kind, sub-standard or non-existent health care, torture, murder, racism, forced labor for now reward, and a million other wrongs occurring on a perpetual basis in the TDCJ - is any way to discipline our children, and produce healthy, happy, clean-living and productive adult citizens. Yet this is how TDCJ sees fit to deal with

157,000 prisoners as a matter of course, never opening its eyes to the egregious nature of its practices.

- (37) The system needs to work on respecting and acknowledging the dignity of offenders and their families. When we treat people with disdain or lack compassion, we do not foster a reciprocal sense of respect for the system to which someone must answer.
- (38) I think that it should be looked into about how badly some of the correctional officers are treating inmates. many times, heads are turned the other way, and silence remains because of fear of retaliation, which still is being denied as going on. Don't get me wrong, I understand that it should not be a walk in the park whenever you are in prison, I just think that the inmates deserve to be treated the same as other human beings. they just made a mistake and sometimes, they just need to be helped instead of trashed on.

GENERAL PRISON LIVING CONDITIONS (HARSH, VIOLENT)

- (1) I work in the cannery and the conditions of the food we can is horrible. Then we use it here or sell it to the shelters and the homeless. Notice said SELL. I won't eat anything that I have seen rotting in the sun, full of insects and snakes and had front loaders rolling over days at a time. But that's ok, it's just TDCJ, the way they think we should be fed and their normal routine of bs.
- (2) Being formerly incarcerated, I can say that the living conditions at the facility I stayed were sub-par. I was at the Rogelio Sanchez facility in El Paso and the summers were brutal. There's no air conditioning in the dorms, except for the guard shack so when its 100 degrees outside it's 115 inside. Also during the spring and fall months there are major sand storms. Every time a storm would blow through I'm having to clean an inch of sand off of my bed. This is not acceptable living conditions.
- (3) Prisoners in some facilities are not fed enough. Food is improperly prepared in some prison facilities.
- (4) Prisoners need to be treated better: Respect for themselves and their property--none of this yelling and throwing their things around. Better Shoes. Air Conditioning would make for more content employees and prisoners.
- (5) Need better food, more clean facilities (well below standards), some areas of prison are roach infested, better medical treatment for prisoners, less lockdown time for the prisoners not involved in the reason for lockdown.
- (6) I think that it should be looked at into getting air conditioners in prisons. many people don't treat their animals how these prisoners are treated. yes they have done wrong, but it is inhumane and cruel to have no air and it being so hot inside the prison cells.
- (7) There should be air conditioning.
- (8) Many prisons have no air conditioning and people suffer from heat exhaustion, especially if they have to work in the fields. People go into prisons that teach them violence and they return into society more violent. There is a lack of basic provisions for prisoners and definitely a lack any respect or compassion for non-violent criminals. Issues of rape and prostitution are rapid.
- (9) Improve living conditions (heat in summer, cold in winter, spiders, rats, etc.).
- (10) Prisoners find ways to smuggle drugs and other stuff in. I think this should be addressed.
- (11) Many inmates are able to find access to drugs in prison.
- (12) My Husband is still in TDCJ Garza West and it has been the biggest emotional and financial drain for me and his parents. His mother cannot sit in a vehicle to ride that far, his father, they will not CORRECT THE VISIT list from friend, I am the only one working, he has been promised to come home months ago by his so called attorney, He went in with a broken leg and has contracted 5 YES 5 STAPH INFECTIONS, A BROKEN FOOT ON THE OTHER LEG, AND IS BEING THREATENED AND BULLIED REGULARLY BY A FEMALE GUARD. So, just let him come home to help his family and consider that punishment enough for having to deal with an ex-wife that lied through her teeth to put him there. TDCJ is the nastiest, god forsaken place I have ever seen in my life and the most disease ridden, uninhabitable place on earth. I have written 7-10 Letters in Support for him, His mother and Father are really both very sick and his 15 and 16 year old will not even discuss coming home until he's there. If you can do anything to get him home, please do, or you will be housing his two daughters as well, put all of us together, instead of tearing all of us farther

apart. PLEASE Lynn Ryno 936-435-1407 Home 832-247-4008-Cell 97 Uteley Rd Huntsville, Texas 77320

- (13) Crack down on the gang violence in the prisons.
- (14) The trend of violence and sexual assault (prisoner-to-prisoner) is a dire problem that needs to be addressed, especially in a civilized society. The violence and sexual assault dehumanizes prisoners and makes them far less likely to be successful upon their return to free society. The time in prison should be spent reading, learning, getting treatment and working-- not worrying about getting stabbed or raped.
- (15) We all know that sending a non-violent person to prison just makes them a better criminal.
- (16) State jails have not met the expectations of their creation. Many offenders have been incarcerated in federal and other T.D.C. units and then commit state jail offenses. They are housed with young offenders with lower level offenses. This leads way too often to rape, extortion, and other unsavory occurrences. I believe it is time for major reform.
- (17) It appears that prisons make people in them worse off.
- (18) It is counter-productive to place non-violent offenders in prisons where they can become acculturated as criminals.
- (19) I feel the criminal justice system should operate in a way that recognizes the worth of ALL the citizens of this country. To treat inmates as if they are animals only encourages them to behave as animals. It is a simple but accurate statement. When will this country wake up and stop 'throwing away' human lives this way?
- (20) I believe non-violent criminals who are incarcerated will become worse individuals by staying in such close contact with rapists, murderers and child molesters. I would rather see a pot head set free than a pot head turned into a violent criminal.
- (21) I believe that the higher educated a person is before entering prison aids a large amount, however after being exposed to the prison lifestyle, education plays less of a factor because of the new trends that are being inhibited within new prisoners.
- (22) Admin seg – isolation – is inhumane.
- (23) I have been really frustrated with the Texas Criminal justice system for the past 4 years and more so recently. In the past with the Racial Profiling and with all the sexual abuses that happen in the women prisons as well as male prisons.
- (24) Violence and gangs within prisons is prevalent. I think some time and money should be spent on this problem as well.
- (25) I highly believe in treatment vs. punishment. These people, as well as their children need mental help instead of just beating them down, making them feel less human, then sending them back out to commit the same crime after they seem to be submissive enough.
- (26) Prisoners should be completely restrained of hateful comments and ALL CRIME at all times. It is time to completely disband rumors and truths about rapings, beat downs, and gangs from jails completely! It is a correctional facility and a rehabilitation facility, and I have heard first accounts that indicate it is worse than many neighborhoods that the criminals left behind. This should not be tolerated. Use technology to your advantage. There must be some way to cost effectively, through deals with local companies like Dell and others, install wireless cameras everywhere, and security systems with motion sensors, microphones, and mics and cameras on personnel at all times. Even in the showers! The prisoners have forfeited the rights to privacy when they were admitted. Not everything can be installed and updated immediately but get rid of useless technology like TVs, microwaves, and amenities, and replace them with beneficial monitoring devices, and educational equipment, desks, chairs.
- (27) I would like to see measures taken against violence within prisons themselves; it seems unfair to place non-violent (and violent) offenders in a system where they are subjected to a higher rate of violent crime than the rest of the population.
- (28) We spend way too much money on punishing people and making them worse human beings in prisons, and then expect them to rejoin society and somehow fit in.
- (29) We should definitely avoid imprisoning non-violent drug offenders; it turns them into hardened criminals in the end.

- (30) We need to quit locking up non-violent offenders and turning them into felons. the most serious issue is non violent drug offenders, makes absolutely no sense to turn them into felons, we mark them for life and give them very little chance at a decent life by making them felons.
- (31) Every effort must be made to eliminate the trafficking of drugs and other contraband in prison.
- (32) We need to get non-violent offenders out of jail NOW. Prison is hell, an inhuman environment that largely corrupts and desecrates those associated with it.
- (33) Warehousing people in jail, where they are in contact with other offenders and can share ideas and make contacts about crime, and then releasing them into the workforce without adequate transition assistance is not the answer.
- (34) Through my experience dealing with friends incarcerated in both county and state facilities, I can see that recidivism is one of the largest problems and it is most definitely not cured through prison sentences in an environment that is more likely to promote crime than deter it. The situations in many facilities often endanger those housed within them, and when inmates return to the world outside, they struggle because they have been so used to the way of life inside--always being on the defensive, feeling threatened, etc. If anything, improving the quality of life inside these facilities would help the transition. A safe environment is the most conducive to rehabilitation, because it seems like right now, punishment is the main goal of the justice system. Anyone living in an environment that is sometimes hostile, sometimes violent, and never completely secure is sure to experience problems later on. Of course, not all facilities are like this, but many, especially state facilities, are.
- (35) There is so much money spent on prisoners to keep them in prison. In prison all they learn is how to be a better criminal. I think there is a much better solution.
- (36) The Texas Criminal Justice system is spending too much money incarcerating individuals charged with nonviolent offenses. I have no doubt that spending a significant amount of time in jail can undoubtedly change a person, and not in a positive manner. It seems there is little effort made to rehabilitate these offenders. In our rush to punish them, we're creating real criminals and ruining lives.
- (37) We have to have honest accountability of the system. We are Texas educated men and women and we can run an effective and safe system for staff as well as inmate.
- (38) More alternate sentencing needs to be used focusing on treatment instead of incarceration for the non-violent offenders. Prisons make people worse.
- (39) The TCJS is creating more dangerous criminals. They learn more about crime while in prison instead of a working trade.
- (40) The most basic issue is prisoner safety. Everyone should have a reasonable expectation of living out his sentence. This means adequate food, housing, medicine and freedom from physical and mental abuse. None of these are guaranteed by TDCJ.
- (41) People often learn how to become criminals in prison.
- (42) More focus should be brought to non-violent offenders. Drug offenders can be rehabilitated in a drug-treatment program (not in a prison). Putting these offenders (often young) in prison gives them access to names & numbers of people who sells drugs on the outside; when they get out, they know where to go to buy drugs. They end up back in prison with a longer sentence.
- (43) TDCJ needs to be more aware of the increasing number of gangs in their prisons and cease turning a blind eye to the gangs that DO exist.
- (44) Less TV, more meaningful jobs, individual and group therapy sessions, family weekends, lectures and concerts, and the respect of their keepers. All prisoners should be addressed as Mr. or Ms, uniforms should be done away with, and 'pay for work' provided. Inmates should be housed in units according to their behavior, and should have the opportunity to progress to a 'better' environment as appropriate, or demoted until behavior improves. Under the above conditions, not only would our prisons be safer for all inside, but society as a whole would be safer, and the profession would attract more self-respecting candidates and would improve all who apply for jobs. As TDCJ stands now, corruption at all levels thrives.
- (45) TDCJ is a gross failure because its primary focus is on petty revenge, punishment and gratuitous humiliation of inmates. History has shown that simple incarceration such as Texas espouses contributes nothing to society except to further harden, embitter, humiliate and then release on society people who are less able to function properly than when they entered prison.

- (46) Many people have the idea that jail is a vacation with free cable TV and weightlifting. I was shocked to find out that there are numerous Texas jails without air conditioning (Huntsville). This fact combined with the knowledge that there are no seats on the metal toilets (believe it or not) is enough to make me not want to go to jail. These little facts need to be made known to the public (especially teens). Wouldn't it be a good deterrence to go to high schools and tell them what it's really like in prison?
- (47) Some people should probably never be paroled. However, they should be treated as humanely as possible while protecting other inmates as well as TDCJ staff.
- (48) I heard somewhere that if people do not go into prison addicted to drugs, they certainly come out addicted to drugs. As much as I would hate to believe that, prisons are of course filled with only people quarantined by society - makes sense that there would be more access to drugs and bad influences. However, I do realize that the people who work in prisons, parole and probation officers work extremely hard at a job most of us would not want in a million years; that I do appreciate.
- (49) The current prison system is just like a college for crime. The system breaks down an inmate's self-esteem, hope and put him in an environment where crime is 'cool.' As an employer, I would be wary of hiring someone who spent time in the prison system because it is common belief that prison breeds criminals.
- (50) Prisons seem to take minor offenders and teach them how to better commit bigger crimes through exposure to 'bigger' criminals. A more effective classification method of prisoners, and using that method to keep the light offenders away from the heavy ones may help.
- (51) Prisons are factories that turn out better and better criminals -- they can all learn from each other.
- (52) We regularly imprison non-violent offenders because there are no community resources for alternative sanctions. They return from prison worse. Our policy of locking up more offenders for longer terms is making the problem of public safety get worse.
- (53) Pay more attention to the inmates needs, they are still and above all, human beings.
- (54) Not enough is done to protect inmates once they are inside. I believe that they need to be punished but they should come out better rather than worse off emotionally and physically when they are released.
- (55) Putting non-violent drug offenders in prison turns many into violent criminals when they get out due to various factors.
- (56) Non-violent criminals should not be punished by being exposed to a violent environment (e.g. prison).
- (57) No matter what the incarcerated individual has done, he or she should be treated humanely and be given whatever is needed to help him or her eventually return to the free world as a responsible and productive citizen.
- (58) Make sure that the individuals are treated as humans and not animals.
- (59) Locking people in cages is cruel and unproductive. It is shameful that the nation which claims to be the most free in the world has so many of its citizens in prison.
- (60) It's brutal. Incarceration in one of the 'correctional' facilities run by TDCJ is a violation of human rights recognized by the law. It almost surely makes non-violent and minor offenders worse by brutalizing them and exposing them to offenders who have done much worse.
- (61) It is my belief that prisons are training grounds for more lives of crime. I feel that a prisoner comes out of prison a more dangerous person than before.
- (62) It is a retroactive system that more often than not corrupts individuals EVEN MORE during their incarceration.
- (63) It distresses me that we as Americans treat our prisons as third world individuals. We get up in arms and upset when prisoners in Iraq are abused by our soldiers, yet we turn a blind eye to our own people. I am ashamed of our prison system.
- (64) Rehabilitation should be key, followed by respect. No one ever deserves to be stripped of human dignity.
- (65) 99% of prisoners and family or friends will agree its a monster factory, caging human beings like animals, treating them like animals only creates animals/monsters in this case, only the strong faithed and strong willed survive this torment and that percentage is very low. other remedies must be in

force other than what we have, or we will end up with a country of monsters teaching their talents to the innocent. new programs must be put into action.

- (66) If the general public had an accurate picture of the realities of the prison experience, in all its brutality and waste of human and economic resources, the Legislature might feel greater pressure to fund a real system. Then again, maybe not - most people have a good idea of what schools are like, but the Legislature doesn't have much to be proud of there either.
- (67) I would say that it seems our prison system has been overcrowded--due much in part by non-violent drug offenses. it seems clear that sending these people to prison only hardens them and makes them less likely to be a contributing member of society upon release.
- (68) It seems like a terrific waste of time and money to incarcerate non-violent drug offenders. From what I've seen, it seems to just encourage further drug use.
- (69) I think the criminal justice system currently is not rehabilitating its prisoners but instead is exposing them to such a harsh environment to the extent that prisoners are more likely to be violent offenders once they are released. The criminal justice system should focus on rehabilitating its prisoners and not lock them away in this atmosphere of brutality, particularly with non-violent drug offenders.
- (70) I think that those that are incarcerated are not treated as human beings and thus creates an atmosphere of frustration and anger.
- (71) I think that the system perpetuates criminality in our society by neglecting the education, mental health, and safety of prisoners, thereby creating a perpetual criminal class and high recidivism rates. The solution is to focus on education and rehabilitation, and neither can be accomplished when prisoners are more likely to find drugs and violence IN prison than in the outside world.
- (72) THEY HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT THESE ARE PEOPLE JUST LIKE US NOT ANIMALS.
- (73) I think that the prisons and jails in Texas are extremely unsafe and that that is unacceptable.
- (74) I think that rehabilitation is key. Without this, prison is just a place for criminals to network. Institutional change could really help confront crime within the state of Texas. Best of Luck!
- (75) Sexual and violent offenders should not generally be housed with nonviolent offenders. By concentrating all those criminals in one place, the system is making them worse and worse, while we need to try and make them better.
- (76) I think the many inmates we have crammed into the prisons with no viable things to occupy their mind, the prison gangs that prey on inmates is a disgrace. We are warehousing these people and then seem surprised when they come back again.
- (77) Try other alternatives after serving a period of time of sentence such as going to Iraq to work or fight. Anything but wasting a life in a prison cell accomplish nothing but learning more ways to be a criminal.
- (78) While it is true that people are in prison for breaking the law, unfair or unreasonable treatment teaches people not to respect the law and its enforcement.
- (79) Fairer treatment of prisoners.
- (80) Every effort should be made to make the criminal justice system less dehumanizing.
- (81) They should not spend so much time in lockdown either. Yes, they have committed crimes, but they are not animals.

PRISONER ACCESS TO RECREATION AND AMENITIES

- (1) I support increased reading with any group, reading unlocks the mind.
- (2) I feel that prisoners should have access to television, perhaps as a reward for good behavior. I find it shocking that prisoners in Livingston do not have this. The reason is not economic - Amnesty International would provide the TVs. I suspect it is just mean.
- (3) I feel that for those prisoners stuck doing time, more money needs to be spent into serving higher quality food. The food served at prisoners here in Texas is horrendous. I feel terrible for those men and women forced to consume it daily. The food is all high fat, high starch and processed. Why are we not serving our prisoners foods of high quality like fruits and veggies?
- (4) They should be able to write to another prisoner they have met and know as long as neither is connected with a gang or has any cases of violence, etc. against them.

- (5) The idea that I can't send a book my self is ridiculous. I have so many books and would like to send them so they may be read, but instead I must go to the book store, buy all new books and pay for shipping on top of that. It is needed.
- (6) The dental care given to prisoners is terribly lacking. Prisoners should be given dentures if their dad-gum teeth fall out! Your Draconian measures in the dental office show Texas to be a mean little state.
- (7) The unit built in 1895 is still in operation, if you consider doors that will not open and water that is brown coming from drinking fountains, roaches crawling out of the food carts, not enough electricity to run over a 25 watt light bulb and hundreds of fans bought by the families of Inmates in storage because there is not enough electricity to run the fans and the 25 watt bulbs and there are not electric plugs in which to plug the fans into.
- (8) The punitive system is made more inhumane by budgetary constraints, i.e. not enough funds for health care, taking away libraries when short-funded.
- (9) More contact with the outside for non gang related inmates, a/c, heat (and I mean a/c in the summer-heat in the winter), better food, allow inmates access to tv in cells as rewards for behavior (either inmate owned or state).
- (10) Prisoners should have access to computers.
- (11) Don't be so strict on offenders having personal items!!
- (12) Need more recreational time for Prisoners, Texas needs to pay prisoner's for their jobs in prison, more commissary items, more access to books/library, increase in items allowed in prisons.
- (13) It seems to me that magazines are a luxury one gives up when they break they law but, books and newspapers, while also a luxury, are essential for keeping the brain active and out of the 'Man, when I get outta here...' mindset. Perhaps have a required reading list...the TDCJ book club. The incarcerated and their loved ones could read the same books and have something to talk about. No one ever became less intelligent from reading a book.
- (14) I believe that Americans, especially Texans spend too much money on prisons. Extra amenities should not be paid to convicted persons. Many law-abiding citizens work very hard for themselves and their families and they cannot pay for health insurance.
- (15) Lifting weights increases testosterone, which increases aggression. If the prisoners want to reduce stress let them do aerobic activity.
- (16) If we are going to incarcerate people, then they should be treated humanely, be fed nutritious meals with consideration of dietary needs, and be given good health care (physical and mental).
- (17) Allow stamps, allow purchase of major food such as sausage packages and cheeses, fresh fruit, improve diet (3-5 servings of fresh fruit or vegetables per day), allow cousins and friends to have contact visits, provide reduced tuition college - families have to send commissary money and travel great distances as it is. Thank you.
- (18) In regards to prisoners, I don't think they should be allowed many of the amenities they currently receive including television, cable, and the internet. Instead the money should go to better medical training in regards to prison authorities.
- (19) I think criminals are given too much while in prison. Life is easy when they are there. They get books, food, education, etc all for free, rather than if they were out on the street doing it by themselves.
- (20) I think allowing the prisoners to weight lift to the extent that they are a danger to the staff, society, and prisoners are irresponsible. Physical activity is necessary, but not to this extent.
- (21) I think that the Texas Department of Criminal Justice needs to improve on a lot of things. For one the mail system they run at all units. Sometimes the mail takes too long to reach the inmates. Sometimes it takes up to 10 days to receive.
- (22) There are major problems with the health care, the work programs, the food, and with the mail not being delivered in a timely manner, retaliation against the inmates from the guards and so forth.
- (23) Food is supplied in inadequate amounts, poorly prepared and not nutritionally balanced. Less isolation for ad seg and DR offenders. Provide adequate amounts of clothing and of hygiene products. Diet so bland as to be demoralizing.

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- There is too many luxuries in the system and many allow too much leniency. Prison is a punishment, not a fresh start in life within walls. Prisoners need to fully understand WHY they are there and completely comprehend it, as that will most logically reduce their return to prison.
 - I would only supply books, board games and local TV to inmates. No weightlifting should be allowed, especially for violent crime offenders, this type of workout provides inmates with the opportunity to get stronger during their jail time. I would also exclude any type of service (for entertainment) that regular people like me have to pay for to get, like cable TV service and movie channels, it is only fair for them to get local TV my tax dollars should be spent in other ways.
 - Get rid of weightlifting equipment in prisons ... the inmates are not there because of a lack of muscle tone ... walking/running paths are great! But no weight rooms (you just create strong criminals!).
 - I do not believe that the prisoners should get all the privileges that they get. Cable tv should not be available, internet should not be available. If anything, we should take some pointers from Mexico. Families have to provide a prisoner with most of the things, such as toilet paper and such. Prisoners these days are taken better care of than some people in America who work everyday of their lives just to provide food for their family. The people who defend our freedom get treated worse than prisoners. It's just too easy for them. I've heard of people actually committing crimes so that they will go to jail...that's a problem that needs to be fixed. Stop making them comfortable.
 - I believe that convicted criminals go to prison for punishment, not to watch free cable or get free health care, or a free 'gym membership'. They are there to have rights taken away because they took away somebody else's rights.
 - I believe they should have no fun at all because with basketball and all of the other additions they have instead of thinking about what they did and learning there lesson they are playing and having fun all for free to them.
 - I most certainly do not agree with giving a prisoner MORE privileges...why make prison easy & comfortable??...that is not the purpose...to make the prisoner feel at home.
 - As a registered nurse, I have visited local prisons and cared for prisoners while they have visited clinics or stayed in Brackenridge hospital. I find that they deserve certain rights, but have never thought they deserve full rights due to the fact that they have in one way or another abused their rights resulting in losing their freedom. It disappoints me to see a question about increasing their rights to 'save money'-- no thanks!
 - I think prisoners have too many excesses today. I believe if things were more strict they would think twice before committing a crime.
 - I understand that defendants have rights and all and all the t's have to be crossed and the i's dotted....but defendants are criminals...they broke the law. Let's not bend over backwards and give them more rights that law abiding citizens have. I am thinking our criminal justice system in this country has gotten to soft on the criminals...it's time we stepped back a few decades...
 - Should be given less leisure time because without being required to work and given all of these extra activities to do they are just living for free and they have no worries.
 - I think violent offenders should have extremely limited access to any entertainment, recreation and should be doing hard labor for at least 10-12 hours a day. They should be harshly punished as a deterrent for committing such crimes.
 - I think the system is too lenient on criminals. Many of those incarcerated receive privileges that I have to pay for (ex. health care, education).
 - I would reduce the amount of weightlifting available. I don't have a problem with the ball games, but making embittered criminals stronger seems counterproductive to safety.
 - I think that prison should be a place for punishment. Although I understand the need for recreation as an outlet of bored energy, I believe it should be limited. This means NO tv, internet access, etc. Newspapers are sufficient to keep the prisoners connected to the outside world. Selected books and magazines are acceptable.
 - I think less money should be spent on prison comforts like T.V. Prison should not be a comfortable or enjoyable experience. It's a place that punishes those that have done wrong in society and

encourages them not to want to repeat their past actions.

- Our system is too much for the criminal. They need to lose all rights when put behind bars. It is not supposed to be a time with games and gym and law library etc.etc. My DI in Marine Corp boot camp was worse than that. He is there for punishment, not pleasure. They need to be worked from sun up to sun down. If we would make it rough enough, it would cut down on a lot of population....esp. when you here of cases that they do not want out.
- People should suffer in prison. It is a crime that people come out of prison fit and well-fed and healthier than when they went in. Hard labor should be the norm for healthy prisoners. They should be broken, and come out of prison looking like they've been in prison (gaunt, emaciated and weak) and not like oversized monsters trained and ready to prey on society even more effectively than before.
- Prisoners shouldn't be given many 'comforts of the home'. Video games, magazines, Tv etc. should be off limits. Prison is a punishment, and shouldn't be more comfortable than life on their own. They should be put into an environment where they are forced to better themselves, and have the option to push that much further if they so choose.
- Prisons should be terrible places to live (e.g. the old Gonzales jail house). Prisoners should be given the minimum necessities for life with no opportunity for recreation (especially crafts that allow them to make weapons etc.). The very hard life prisoners will have to endure will deter first time criminals as well as repeat offenders.
- The penalties that are assigned to the prisoners seem almost too kind. The State system seems to be more concerned with making them comfortable. This shouldn't be an issue. You want to scare them with prison so badly that they will never want to do time again.
- I think that the prisons are too lenient on criminals with letting them have too many comforts. I have been to other countries where crime is not tolerable and the punishment is more severe and the crime rate is low. I think our system needs a lot of improvements.
- Through a willing course of action these individuals have forfeited their inborn rights as Citizens of the United States of America, and are thus no longer entitled to these rights enjoyed by non-incarcerated individuals outside prison walls.
- I believe that if you are convicted of a crime and are sent to jail, you are there to serve your time because you were not able to make the right decision. I believe that prisoners should not be allowed to have any recreation time as to play games, and to lift weights. You all are just pumping these criminals with more iron to get stronger so that they can do the same things that got them there in the first place.
- At no point should an inmate feel rewarded or live under a pleasing environment while serving time.
- We need to put all criminals behind bars for a very long time, and make prison a real punishment. No more TV, books, games, etc.--keep the criminals in their cells 24 hours a day.
- I think it is a shame that honest hard working people do not have health care, education opportunities, cable TV, libraries, workout rooms, 3 meals a day for themselves or their children, but criminals have all of these things. It is just not right. To cut back on the expense of housing a prisoner, cut back on their amenities.
- Some will tell you it is better in there than how they live on in the real world!
- Prisoners need a desire for achievement. Make them read books and participate civically, rather than lift weights that only let them commit more violent crimes.
- If a prisoner commits a violent crime I believe to return the favor. I think you should beat him if he acts up. Give him a taste of how it feels and maybe he will stop.
- I think we could learn a lesson from Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Criminals shouldn't be such a burden on Joe Taxpayer. If tents are good enough for our armed forces in Iraq, it should be fine for convicted felons.
- I am a big big fan of Sheriff Joe Arpaio (Maricopa County, Arizona). Every system needs to take lessons from how he runs his jails. He continues to reduce the costs of housing prisoners and pours that in to other programs. If he were in Texas, I would vote every year to keep him as Sheriff. Send representatives to Arizona to learn from the very best in criminal justice.
- Do what they do with prisoners in Maricopa County. Why don't you follow their example already?

- Do not coddle the inmates.
- I think too much money is spent on keeping prisoners comfortable - they have all meals, health care, and education provided for them at taxpayers' expense. Perhaps some feel they have a better life on the inside than they could on the outside.

PRISONER VISITATION AND FAMILY ISSUES

- (1) I strongly feel that the 2-hour visitation should be increased to at least 4 hours on Sat and Sun for immediate family members, with those traveling distances of 100 miles, or more, given preference for the extended visits.
- (2) Visitation is a joke. If I live 250 miles away from the unit I am only granted a 2 hour visit for one day. That is 8 hours of driving for a 2 hour visit. It's ridiculous that all that money and time is spent going to see my loved one, and I get very little in return. I AM NOT THE ONE WHO BROKE THE LAW! I SHOULD NOT BE PUNISHED FOR HIS MISTAKES!
- (3) ALLOW collect calls to family members, longer hours/and more days per week that family members are allowed visitation.
- (4) I feel that Inmates should be allowed to receive their mail on Saturday again. I feel that Inmates that have a clean record should be allowed Special Visits on Special Day's such as Wedding Anniversary's.
- (5) Would like to see more emphasis put on improving visitation for family/friends in Texas. Also some importance stressed for telephone services for inmates. Feel sometimes all a group's interests are focused ONLY on probation/especially parole. What about more consideration of various issues for incarcerated with longer sentences????????
- (6) Nieces, nephews, and cousins should be allowed contact visits.
- (7) House inmates as close to home as possible.
- (8) Overnight or permanent lodging for offender and spouse to reduce problems with sex in prison. (Mexico is doing this.)
- (9) I believe that a resident in a prison shouldn't be hundreds of miles away from family and/or friends. With gas prices escalating, it is a severe hardship on families wishing to visit their loved ones on a regular basis.
- (10) If the inmate has a young child why are they sent to a prison more then three and a half hours away. Especially when there are facilities closer.
- (11) I'd like to see access to the outside during visitation with prisoners so that we might be able to enjoy a nice day without being within the walls of the prison.
- (12) I would like the TCJD to consider placing inmates closer to their hometown. It is so very difficult to visit our loved ones as often as we would like because of the distance.
- (13) I think the dress code for visitors should compromise with the seasons, especially during the spring and summer months.
- (14) I believe that married inmates should be allowed to have conjugal visits as this keeps a family together as well as helps the inmates relieve some stress that they face every day.
- (15) I think that the visitation time and number of visitors should be extended for families or friends that have to travel eight to twelve hours to visit.
- (16) It should be looked at, if you travel a long distance and the person is in high security, then more than 2 hours should be given.
- (17) Another issue is about visitation, I think the amount of time should be increased to at least 3 hours, and that friends should also be allowed contact visits not just immediate family.
- (18) Texas justice is harsher and more difficult on families. For a system that purports to be pro-family, I find that the Texas system is demeaning and impersonal towards family members who merely wish to visit their loved ones. Visitation needs to be increased.
- (19) Allow for 3 adults for visitation.
- (20) Dependents that come a long way should get more than one weekend visit.
- (21) Offenders should be able to make phone calls regularly and for reasonable amounts of time. Phone calls should be less expensive. Contact visits for non violent offenders. Mail should be passed on to offender and families more quickly.

PRISONERS SHOULD WORK

- (1) Criminal Justice System needs to become more efficient. For instant the Ellis Unit house 2400 offenders on 14,000 acres of land. It should be turning a profit with farm produce alone. Many jobs on road and county maintenance could be done by offenders. There is nothing wrong with turning the prisons into institutions that produce a profit. There are many, many things prisoners could do to help earn their keep. Clean public schools after hours, mow the grass on the side of highways, maintain county trucks and equipment, build housing for low income families, etc... Please do not allow the waste to continue!
- (2) I believe that some of the long-term convicts should spend more time working (i.e. farm labor) so that the prisons are more self-sufficient.
- (3) I think that creative ideas on how to put criminals to work serving the community are of paramount importance. Maybe the best panacea to their antisocialism would be for them to feel the satisfaction of performing a job of real use to the community, to be helped to understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. I don't think that community service should be 'inflicted' as a form of punishment, but rather shown convincingly to be more fulfilling to a person than criminal behavior. Thanks for the opportunity to share this view.
- (4) Feel that inmates working would help keep busy and could possibly learn a trade that would help upon release.
- (5) I think the prisoners should receive little free time, and should be only allowed to study/ read/ etc during such time, and they should be put to manual labor while in prison.
- (6) I know that some of these people aren't as bad but they are there for some reason and they should be punished and put to work.
- (7) Instead of housing prisoners to workout and watch TV, take them into their neighborhoods to pick up trash, rebuild buildings, lawn care.
- (8) I believe in stricter work programs for prisoners. They have committed crimes and should be made to pay for them with labor, and yes, the humility that comes with being put on display like that. I do not think a hard day's labor is 'Cruel and Unusual', instead it is just the opposite. Tax paying Texas citizens work hard for their money, some of which goes to house the prisoners of Texas and it is only fair that the prisoners do labor in return for being given: a bed, three meals a day, an education if they will only reach for it, and a chance to return to society and leave something better for the future.
- (9) Use inmates to work on prison building, growing, or producing some sort of products to help with the expenses of the prison.
- (10) I think that those that are incarcerated are not treated as human beings and thus creates an atmosphere of frustration and anger. There should be more things for them to do to help increase there productivity including being able to earn wages while in prison to help support their family and create some sort of nest egg so there return to society is easier.
- (11) I think that something obviously needs to change regarding the prison system because we are having an increasing number of repeat offenders; rehabilitation isn't working. I think that the prison system should become more strict; it should resort back to previous methods where the prisoners had to grow their own food, instead of our tax payers' dollars going to feed, clothe, and take care of them. They are CRIMINALS. Once they committed their crime, they basically lost all of their rights as a citizen.
- (12) Some convicts are not rehabilitative -- such individuals should be involved in more work to make the farms more self-sufficient.
- (13) I really believe that while in jail work should not be optional but mandatory, 8 hours a day.
- (14) Damage to property should be worked off by anyone responsible.
- (15) Those in prison/jail should work for their keep and not cost tax-payers so much.
- (16) More training of inmates for when they are released. Do more work in the unit. Such as raising food and repairs to the building.
- (17) Prisoners should be put to use. There is nothing wrong with good, solid work, and giving back to the

community. This will help better them by giving them a work ethic, along with self confidence. A program of this nature did extremely well, in which many women prisoners worked as fire fighters during their incarceration. Most of these women didn't return to prison, since they knew how to work after that experience. Also, educational books, and religious books of many varieties should be available.

- (18) Prison farms should be much higher on the work scale as well as any manufacturing type work.
- (19) Should be made work and earn their keep. The work should be hard enough that they do not want to ever come back. TDCJ cannot rehabilitate the majority of them, so their stay in prison should be an experience they do not want to repeat. The prisons have thousands of acres of land. The prisoners should farm this land and grow crops for consumption and income.
- (20) I think non-violent offenders should be offered a chance to pay off their public debt while getting job training in the process. If they are working, this should be cheap. Texas has plenty of land; I say we put the criminals to work in an agrarian lifestyle. Make them farm, but keep their funds very low. Organic, sustainable agriculture does not require the typical capital intensive inputs (pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, heavy machinery) that traditional agriculture requires. Instead, it requires lots of hard work. Also, organic foodstuffs sell for a higher profit margin, especially if the labor is free. So, I suggest making those criminals work all day growing vegetables and stuff, then they will be too tired to start trouble. They can help feed their families while they are incarcerated, and they can provide service to society as a whole. I think this could be a problem if their cheap labor is too competitive with traditional organic farms. This could be avoided in a few ways. For example, if you used that food to feed other prisoners, schoolchildren and welfare families (instead of feeding them factory food with low nutritional value), then it would not compete with the organic market. You could also simply sell to the same organic market, but maintain similar prices as the non-criminal competitors. This way, the work of the prisoners could be used to lower the taxpayer's burden in other operations (feeding criminals, children, and the poor) as well as make some profit. The profit could pay off the prisoners' debt to society (the price of the crime and the price of the punishment) and possibly part of it could go to the working criminals themselves to pay off private debts and make some savings so they could get started on their own. Please consider alternatives to the pricey and destructive criminal justice system status quo.
- (21) They should all be forced to work, go to therapy (evaluation by psychologists, and/or psychiatrists), exercise, and be educated with classes based on the admitted level of education. This 'model of rehabilitation' doesn't have to initially exist as such, in full, provided at least some of all aforementioned requirements are represented, and initial steps taken toward it. A routine must be established early to ensure engaged participation and calm anger and idle hands. It could be rotated daily, hourly or both (like high school block scheduling) at least 4 hours, have therapy for 4 hours and education for 4 hours, with visitation on weekends and optional church of all majority faiths recognized where everyone is encouraged to participate no one is discriminated. Obviously it is just a model, and each individual would have to be treated differently. The other details should be more fleshed out as well. For instance, working. Manual labor works the body, is very satisfying (personal account) and generally tires the individual out. It could be rotated with other jobs and 'better' jobs could be given on the basis of good behavioral evaluations. And jobs should be assigned on a case by case basis. The work could be used to pay for their stay and education and safety.
- (22) I strongly believe that the prisoners should have to work off their stay in prison by working the fields or some other area of work in the prison like they used to have to.
- (23) I don't believe prisoners should spend their incarceration reading pornographic magazines and watching television, but should work HARD all day and be too tired to get into trouble at night.
- (24) Prisons are too cushy! TV and recreation? Are you kidding? Get their criminal behinds to work!
- (25) Any type of work project that would require off-site work should be offered only to first time offenders, and on a case by case basis. Work for repeat offenders should be limited to work in the prison.

REHABILITATION & TREATMENT PROGRAMS

- (1) I feel SAFP is a program designed to restructure criminal thinking. I am a former SAFP graduate and that program changed my life. I currently go into the prisons and speak about the changes I have made and the success I have gained. I also, am attending college to obtain my LCDC degree. I have had the opportunity to become a mother and daughter again. Without SAFP I would be dead today.
- (2) I believe in treatment, I am a recovering addict, my judge; John Cruzot of Dallas TX sent me to SAFP and it was the best thing, I am very blessed to have that. I now have almost 6 years clean and sober and have not committed another crime or used alcohol or drugs since Nov. 18th 2000.
- (3) I am an ex-offender who was afforded drug treatment through SAFP in 1994-1995 at Havins Unit in Brownwood, TX. The program coupled with a complete surrender to Jesus Christ has completely changed my life. Now, I'm giving back to society and actively do some 51 TDCJ Units and perform counseling services to literally tens of thousands of people state wide through my newly founded C.O.O.L. Ministries, Inc. www.coolministries.net Please consider more treatment opportunities to help people change from the inside out. In His Grip, Boyd L. Harrell 281-687-8366
- (4) As a formerly incarcerated person my experience was for substance abuse (Therapeutic Treatment). It is very important that TDCJ restore the treatment initiative that was started in 1992. The treatment and rehab services that were cut in 2003 must be restored because increasing volunteers does not make up for such drastic cuts. Treatment works, I am living proof.
- (5) In my college-level English classes in the Tennessee Colony units, I listened to the offenders lament the lack of rehabilitation initiatives in the prisons. An advocate of arts and spirituality all my life, I know the data that convinces us of the arts' power to nurture, rehabilitate, heal.
- (6) Focus should be on rehabilitation, treatment, correcting social inequalities, eliminating poverty, supporting families to be together, providing sustainable ways for single mothers to care for their families.
- (7) From 40 years of criminal law practice in DFW I believe the prevailing hostility to rehabilitative programs in and out of prison is misguided and unfortunate. Most offenders remain in society or return there sooner or later. They need to learn how to avoid antisocial behavior. That should be the first goal of the system.
- (8) There needs to be more facilities to rehabilitate these people who have committed crimes.
- (9) I feel like the ultimate goal of the TCJS should be to make the 'bad' people of society 'good' again, instead of just using jails to house these people and basically waste lives. Yeah, people make mistakes and should have to pay for them, but I feel like anybody has the potential to do good, as well as bad things in life.
- (10) Without compromising security, we need a much stronger program to rehabilitate offenders and prepare them for reentry.
- (11) While in college at the University of Texas at Austin, I've taken a very deep interest in criminology and psychopathology. I took approximately 9 or more hours of college coursework that addressed criminal justice and criminology. Throughout these courses it has repeatedly been shown that in order to somehow lower crime rates, education levels and the amount of treatment (such as counseling or drug rehab), when raised, can greatly reduce recidivism.
- (12) Because prison should be rehabilitative not just punitive, more money should be allocated to drug treatment since such a high percentage of prisoners are in jail for drugs or drug-related crimes. Plus, because treatment is so full, every effort should be made to expand and allow more space into the programs already available.
- (13) I think that it would be most appropriate to combine incarceration with treatment. While treatment would very likely help convicted persons understand their mistakes and become healthier, they still need to understand that they too need to pay the consequences of their actions. By separating treatment from incarceration, I believe it sends the message that the crime is less severe if it was committed while under the influence and it also creates an excuse for the committer.
- (14) Please reduce recidivism rates by treatment and education so people have a perspective when they

come out.

- (15) We need treatment.
- (16) Allocate more funding for intermediate and long term substance abuse treatment programs. Do away with any funding of programs less than 30 days as I feel they are ineffective.
- (17) It seems to me that some in the Texas Criminal Justice Department don't want the inmates to get better.
- (18) We need to utilize the Faith community and its volunteers to the fullest extent to work with offenders in areas of rehabilitation and community aftercare programs.
- (19) I feel like more treatment should be in forced in the prison system.
- (20) It is clear, and research supports this, that simply locking people up for x number of years and then releasing them and expecting them to suddenly conform to the norms and expectations of a society that they have been estranged from, with no support or guidance, is folly. Ideally, we would develop a system to identify these people and their circumstances and stop the cycle before it starts. However, that does nothing for those who are already involved in it; the 95% that will return to society. We can make a difference in what happens to these people! But we have to provide them with the resources- this means intervention through intensive, dedicated, and knowledgeable experts on a variety of issues. This means mental health care, physical health care, drug treatment, educational and vocational training. This means an investment. This means changes-big time changes! And of course, this means money. We have to find people willing to have the courage to do this and the creativity to make it happen.
- (21) We need to lower the number of persons incarcerated. We have the highest percentage in the world. This is disgraceful. Education and treatment programs are essential.
- (22) I am astounded at the current blindness to the ineffectiveness of the retributive system currently employed. The system as it stands serves only to encourage recidivism and does absolutely nothing to facilitate rehabilitation.
- (23) WE NEED MORE MONEY TO PROVIDE LIFE SKILLS CLASSES AND LONG-TERM TREATMENT PROGRAMS.
- (24) I think that the judicial system needs to be looked at again. Too many people fall through the cracks. I for one was charged with a trivial matter, taking up valuable state resources, when the whole thing could have been solved by me paying for the damages, which I had offered to do. I honestly do not understand how I spent a night in jail just because of damages that equaled probably about \$50. It boggles the mind. Seeing the ineptitude of the system in my case, I have taken a more pessimistic view on the system in general. I don't consider myself a dangerous criminal by any stretch of the imagination. I do believe that treatment programs rather than jail time can be fortuitous. Prisons are necessary, but so is increased spending on treatment, rehab, or any other number of programs that can help aid in facilitating the detainee.
- (25) I fully support the idea of creating and supporting treatment programs. Texas has lagged behind for so long with regard to treatment programs, psychiatric medical care, and rehabilitation programs for criminals.
- (26) We need more drug treatment options for those convicted of crimes in Texas. We are too limited as to what we can do with those who want and need treatment, both in and out of prison.
- (27) We need more drug rehab prisons (like Winnsboro).
- (28) We need more allocation of funds towards treatment.
- (29) We need it to continue protecting, teaching, rehabilitating the criminal population.
- (30) We need a system that works and rehabilitates. The system we have now is broken.
- (31) We do need more education and treatment.
- (32) We can't continue to do the same old things & expect better results. More treatment, more education.
- (33) I'd like to see less emphasis on incarceration and more emphasis on long term offender change. The offender should have 'learned his lesson', so to speak. Helpful programs should be set up so that the offender will be better off.
- (34) Whereas prisons exist to punish/ rehabilitate inmates, one must realize that despite human interest, these individuals have committed a crime. Thus, treatment of these persons should reflect the severity of the crime committed.

- (35) If its verifiable that money on programs save 2-4 dollars for money spent, AND if it reduced recidivism, that is clearly in the interest if making Texas safer and better at spending public money for public good. more prisons is CLEARLY not the answer, unless you have friends in the prison industry. the answers must be STRUCTURAL to the culture, leading to fundamental changes, not big band-aids.
- (36) We already know that as the system stands, recidivism rates are appalling. We definitely need to focus on treatment and education, if only because nothing else has worked.
- (37) Warehousing people in jail, where they are in contact with other offenders and can share ideas and make contacts about crime, and then releasing them into the workforce without adequate transition assistance is not the answer - the economics of this situation alone increase the likelihood that they will offend once again. Treatment, training, and work programs to enable people to make an effective transition to a productive working life will cost much less money and reduce crime in the long run.
- (38) Treatment is absolutely VITAL for all offenders whether it be treatment for substance abuse issues, anger, physical & emotional abuse. I'm a taxpayer, I'm tired of seeing more jails go up, I want my tax dollars to go towards early intervention counseling & treatment.
- (39) If TCJD continues to handle non-violent, non-serial cases, they should have a different focus for these cases and it should be doing what's needed to help these people live better lives and contribute to the world. Psychiatric care, counseling, education, good support from a caring person, life skills training, job skills training – whatever's needed to motivate people to do better for themselves. If this approach is outside the realm of 'criminal justice,' then there needs to be another agency to do the work.
- (40) Treatment and rehabilitation far more important to safety of society than incarceration.
- (41) Treatment and Rehabilitation.
- (42) Warehousing offenders will never work! They will be much worse off when they are released. The state must sponsor programs that rehabilitate offenders that wish to be rehabilitated.
- (43) Treatment and education are the only way to stop the cycle of incarceration.
- (44) Treating the underlying behavioral issues and educating prisoners/probationers about dysfunctional behaviors could help these individuals to create better lives in the future.
- (45) Too much money is spent on prisons. There is not enough research results being shared with legislators regarding why treatment/community corrections is important. The reality is many of those persons sent to prison would be better served if they were treated for the problem rather than 'just punished.' The criminal justice system would improve dramatically if legislators would stop believing that things like Boot Camp, Electronic Monitoring, and Deep Lung Breath Machines make a difference in changing behavior. Those things sound good to the public but they don't change behavior. Counseling, therapy, supervision changes behavior.
- (46) There are great people in prison who just need some counseling, medical, etc. help to handle their problems.
- (47) Not enough is spent on drug/alcohol rehab.
- (48) I think the state needs to focus more on rehabilitative measures and less on punitive. Prison alone does not change someone. It will take more measures and more strength-based programs to help offenders return to the community and not commit additional crimes.
- (49) Bottom line...non-violent/non-aggressive offenders are eventually returned to society. It is in our best interest to rehabilitate these individuals as quickly as possible and release them. It should be mandatory that young offenders receive intense drug/alcohol treatment and counseling as well as an education while they are incarcerated. Why drug/alcohol treatment? Because most of these young offenders that committed a crime were under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- (50) Even though I think prisons should also be for punishment, I would like to see more rehabilitation being done in the prison systems.
- (51) I think that the system perpetuates criminality in our society by neglecting the education, mental health, and safety of prisoners, thereby creating a perpetual criminal class and high recidivism rates. The solution is to focus on education and rehabilitation, and neither can be accomplished when prisoners are more likely to find drugs and violence IN prison than in the outside world.
- (52) Incarceration facilities should be places of rehabilitation, not punishment. A dog hit on the nose is

aware that it did something wrong, but doesn't know what unless show what it is supposed to do. Learning is learning no matter the species. Animals, including humans, are more likely to learn and make permanent changes from positive reinforcement rather than negative reinforcement. I think these individuals should be given the opportunity to earn their G.E.D., have access to books, and mentors - maybe other former prisoners that have been able to hold a job for more than a year - to help them find a craft that they are good at, so that they don't have to return to the life they were involved in previously.

- (53) It is impossible to give a second chance to prisoners without addressing their health-related and psychological needs, so these areas need more funding.
- (54) Texas should try harder to keep people out of prison in the first place. We need to focus on education, treatment and job skills. But if we must incarcerate some, let's give them the education, treatment and job skills they need so that when they do re-enter society, they can be successful. Our current system is shameful!
- (55) I believe in trying to rehabilitate prisoners.
- (56) Too much money is spent on incarceration and none is spent on rehabilitation. Incarceration is used too much and sentences are not appropriate. More money should be spent on breaking the cycle.
- (57) More resources needed for treatment and probation services.
- (58) I THINK THAT THE SYSTEM HAS FORGOTTEN THAT THE GOAL IS TO REHABILITATE THESE PEOPLE & NOT TO ENSURE MORE PEOPLE BE INCARCERATED OR RETURN TO PRISONS. MORE TIME & MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT TOWARD EDUCATION & REFORM FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS.
- (59) Through my experience dealing with friends incarcerated in both county and state facilities, I can see that recidivism is one of the largest problems and it is most definitely not cured through prison sentences in an environment that is more likely to promote crime than deter it. The situations in many facilities often endanger those housed within them, and when inmates return to the world outside, they struggle because they have been so used to the way of life inside--always being on the defensive, feeling threatened, etc. If anything, improving the quality of life inside these facilities would help the transition. A safe environment is the most conducive to rehabilitation, because it seems like right now, punishment is the main goal of the justice system. Anyone living in an environment that is sometimes hostile, sometimes violent, and never completely secure is sure to experience problems later on. Of course, not all facilities are like this, but many, especially state facilities, are. On the subject of rehabilitation, I have a friend that has been incarcerated as part of a deferred adjudication arrangement, put on probation, placed in jail again for a probation violation, and then finally had his deferred revoked. Fortunately, he is now residing in the Central Texas Treatment Center instead of state prison. I cannot stress enough how much more of a help rehab is than prison. He is completely changing his mindset and is doing so much better now, whereas the periods spent in jail did almost nothing to change his behavior. I'm sure other non-violent offenders, in particular those convicted of drug-related crimes, would likewise benefit from the same treatment.
- (60) Far too much emphasis on incarceration and not even remotely close to enough given to rehabilitation and vocational training.
- (61) Everything I read tells me that too much is spent on incarceration, not nearly enough on prevention and/or rehabilitation.
- (62) More treatment and educational opportunities for inmates at every level and type of correctional institution.
- (63) Those who are in prison or on probation need to be in programs that address their problem whether it be drugs, anger issues, etc.
- (64) I don't think we should use prisons to 'throw away' people. I think more emphasis needs to be placed on rehab, education and treatment. The problem of crime and prisoners is not going to go away until we fix the root of the problem ... adding more prisons is only a band-aid solution. Help these men and women turn their lives around, whenever possible. That is the greatest good we can do.
- (65) Give prisoners more education, more drug-treatment, and more chances to not become prisoners again.
- (66) I believe treatment is better than just sitting in jail. Put people in jail but also offer them rehab and or

counseling while in jail. I think the return rate to prison and crime might be lowered by doing so.

- (67) They need to concentrate on rehabilitation not so much on punishment.
- (68) They have NO rehabilitation at all.
- (69) There needs to be more concentration on rehab programs to help inmates instead of locking them up and throwing away the key.
- (70) More rehabilitation is needed.
- (71) There are too many prisoners with no opportunity to better themselves or their families while incarcerated. Crime should be punished yet we need to find a better method of determining how to handle or correct the problem of how a person went wrong. Education and rehabilitation of prisoners should be top priority to stop a person from returning to prison.
- (72) The Texas Criminal Justice System should spend more money and effort on rehabilitation.
- (73) Education and rehabilitation are often ignored.
- (74) More money should be spent to rehabilitate not reinstatement of criminals into the penal system.
- (75) Treatment & a hell-of-a-lot more of it! Texas is below pathetic when it comes to human resources treatment ... and the prison system is no exception ... Thank you!
- (76) The TCJS places too much focus on punishment rather than rehabilitation. Offenders commit crimes for socio-economical and psychological reasons. Psychiatrists can help offenders work through their issues and kill the problem at the source which is the mind.
- (77) The GRAD PROGRAM needs to be open to more inmates.
- (78) The State needs to spend money educating and rehabilitating prisoners in the hopes that the cycle of violence and substance abuse ends.
- (79) The prison system should be more of a priority. Judging from statistics I have seen, these people live in bad conditions and after they are released they are compelled to become involved in the same behavior that got them arrested in the first place. We should put more of an emphasis on rehabilitating criminals, especially those who were involved with drugs or alcoholism.
- (80) I believe it would be wise to begin to spend money on treatment programs when a prisoner begins to show true effort to change their lives and thinking around, then sent to a unit where extensive treatment for the area of concern can be taught, therefore better preparing them to return to society. It would be very important at this point to have them the closest to their families as possible. This would better enhance their possible success as they work 'with' their family and the program toward coming home.
- (81) Addiction is a physical and mental illness. These people need medical treatment for their disease as well as punishment for their crimes.
- (82) The only way to reduce crime to educate and rehabilitate prisoners. If somebody has no job skills or education, there is no way they can make a life for themselves when they are released. This is the ONLY thing that will prevent people from going to prison or re-entering the prison system once they are released.
- (83) The numbers prove the unemployed and uneducated are more likely to be convicted of a crime in there lifetime, and, moreover, people released from prison often times end up going back--more money for education (across the board) and more work placement after release and job training while their in jail.
- (84) The key is to reduce recidivism. Education, rehab, healthcare and visitation from family and friends all directly result in recidivism reduction. We must move from simple incarceration and punishment back towards rehabilitation.
- (85) The focus with drug offenders should be on rehabilitation. I have personally seen so many people in and out of the justice system because of drugs. They never learned anything from being locked up except that they had to be more careful. They didn't realize just how bad the things they were doing are. These people need help, not punishment. Rehabilitation should help with not only the drug problem but also other aspects of those people's lives, such as education and employment.
- (86) The focus of incarceration should be less about locking people up to keep them off the streets and more about rehabilitating people and particularly giving them education opportunities.
- (87) The current TX criminal justice system embodies waste of public resources in terms of valuable human lives as well as public funding. Texas ought to reallocate its prison funding to education and

treatment for people both in and out of the prison system.

- (88) I believe that more money, time, and effort should be spent on educating, treating, and preparing prisoners for a successful re-entry into society.
- (89) The criminal justice system needs to be completely revamped, because it obviously isn't working very well. There should be more rehabilitation programs, because statistics even show that they work better than just sticking someone in prison.
- (90) If an offender must be incarcerated, and if he or she will eventually be released back into the community, I believe that rehabilitative programs in prison must be provided. As long as they are locked up, we should make the best use of their time behind bars as possible.
- (91) All prisoners should have access to mental health workers and rehabilitation services. Most of these individuals will be out on the street again with no new skills and worse, in most cases, they will have learned even more maladaptive behaviors inside. If they are going to be locked up anyway, I think this time should be used more wisely through rehabilitation efforts. every effort should be made to rehabilitate through mental health services, job skills training, etc. Overall, building more prisons and jails is not the answer. Here in Texas we have one of the highest rates of incarceration across the nation, but our crime rates are not better than in other states. Here in Texas we could be the leaders in rehabilitation services for criminals.
- (92) I believe that they should have access to counseling and education because many of them are there because of a lack of education and a lack of a social need of one kind or another.
- (93) The aim of prison should always be 'betterment of society'. The implementation of that is normally not by 'removing people from streets' if they are going to get back to crime once they are released. Therefore, it is important to rehabilitate them into society
- (94) Through observations of my own and several experiences I believe that treatment and education is the key.
- (95) TDCJ should spend more money on rehab & reentry issues. TDCJ should contract treatment to professionals and increase SAFP, TTC, aftercare funding and pre diem rates associated with those contracts. TDCJ is pushing treatment out, by underfunding these programs they are killing them silently.
- (96) TDCJ should continue to emphasize the Cognitive Intervention and the CHANGES programs for all inmates.
- (97) Texas has an incarceration mentality rather than a rehabilitation mentality. Rehabilitation is what provides a prisoner with a free start. If they choose to be a repeat offender, then focus incarceration efforts on them. First time offenders in particular should have more access to rehabilitative programs to give them the opportunity to do better (non-violent, non-sexual offenders).
- (98) TDCJ needs to provide many more programs for education and rehabilitation rather than just housing offenders. TDCJ also needs to provide positive reinforcement for those offenders that are trying to succeed.
- (99) The prison business is a money maker and they want to keep people in there longer for financial reasons. the rehab programs are just for show and a total joke. They don't want to rehab these people one bit. They want them to come back.
- (100) Rehabilitation is non-existent.
- (101) There needs to be rehab in place and good honest rehab and not the rehab given now for drug use. The rehab for drug offenders consists of sitting in a stainless steel chair for 4-5 hours at a very early hour in the morning and if you even drop your head the guards write a case on you to prevent you from getting paroled. See something wrong with this? In other words, the prison system stinks and is broken and needs to totally be revamped!!!
- (102) Spend more money for treatment programs.
- (103) More education and treatment, and less television would be better for anyone.
- (104) I would like to see more treatment units with a cooperation between treatment and education, which is the case at the Johnston Unit.
- (105) Supported rehab may be beneficial, anyone can participate in rehab, but the support is what continues abstinence, recovery, and making responsible choices.
- (106) I believe in drug specific beds dedicated to treatment.

- (107) Make sure people get adequate treatment for emotional and mental difficulties.
- (108) Spending on new prisons is unacceptable - more money must be used on treatment programs and re-entry programs.
- (109) Some people will never change, but some will and the system needs to be open to help the person that WILL change.
- (110) Right now I think there is too much emphasis on punishment and too little emphasis on improvement. What good does it do to separate people from general society, place them an environment with tons of other prisoners, and fail to give them the tools to change their ways when they get out?
- (111) They need to be rehabilitated whenever that it possible (I do realize that this isn't always possible).
- (112) Re-integration and re-habilitation does not exist behind the prison walls making TDCJ mission statement false.
- (113) Rehabilitation is so important. If we put prisoners through so much pain in prison, they will not be emotionally well when they leave.
- (114) Rehabilitation and compassion need to be introduced into the system.
- (115) Rehab, education, religious, and work opportunities in prisons are of the most value to a prisoner.
- (116) Make the goal rehabilitation instead of retaliation. more treatment programs, anger management classes, basically the whole system needs to shift focus from punishment to reform.
- (117) Recommend the prisons more actively support and encourage 12 step programs/ groups within the prison communities.
- (118) Quit trying to make prison comfortable for inmates and start making it punishment. they could still have access to job skills, education and treatment, but not television and candy!
- (119) SAFPF needs more beds so the wait is not as long. Money for drug treatment with a stay of one (1) year or more.
- (120) I think that rehabilitation is key. Without this, prison is just a place for criminals to network. Institutional change could really help confront crime within the state of Texas. Best of Luck!
- (121) I think that rehabilitation should be one of the top priorities since many, especially defendants with drug charges, are repeat offenders.
- (122) I believe my tax dollars should be spent on a correctional facility that corrects and rehabilitates its inmates. This would be best accomplished with a military style facility. This facility would consist of intense physical activity, team work drill, discipline, and education. A boot camp style facility would create an environment that being the disciplined, strong, team leader would be 'cool' and would increase self esteem by overcoming obstacles. Pair that with an education system that teaches a tech skill such plumbing, electronics, auto repair, etc and you will have rehabilitated inmates that hope, direction and a tangible skill to contribute to society and the economy. If you have any questions you can contact me at derek884@hotmail.com.
- (123) WE NEED EARLY INTERVENTION, DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAMS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING.
- (124) Prisons should be run to rehabilitate and to provide valuable skills so that prisoners can have a better chance of succeeding once they get out.
- (125) Prisoners need counseling and education in order that they improve their lives.
- (126) Where are the rehab programs?
- (127) Prisoners, people under probation, parole, family members, administrators, and every single one of us are human beings with rights. Everyone, regardless of the past, should have a second chance and provide the necessary means to rehabilitate and start a new life. After that, it's their own choice if they want to start a new life or stay in prison.
- (128) Reactive - rehabilitation for offender and his family. All need to be treated to prevent their return.
- (129) Positive training and treatment.
- (130) Programs that educate, teach a trade, help through therapy, and drug treatment programs are the best solution to control our increasingly high recidivism rate. Radical change is needed. What we are doing now in the prison system is not working and is going to get worse. The women population will continue to increase. Women are increasingly and alarmingly becoming more violent in society.
- (131) Needs more rehabilitation.

- (132) We see no evidence that any form of rehabilitation is apparent or intended within the Texas Justice System. The manner in which the system works would be acceptable and correct if the results showed that it had a reducing effect on crime levels. The fact is that crime levels are increasing particularly for serious crime, therefore the system must be deemed to be failing and other ways should be tried, but we feel the mentality is not there, or perhaps the ability, to investigate and implement alternatives.
- (133) Most sentences should be shortened and the death penalty replaced with a life or a long sentence. Use the money saved for prevention (education, job training, mental health and drug treatment programs) and rehabilitation and education in prison.
- (134) We must look to prevent incarceration and rehabilitate those who will re-enter the general public. Spending, I imagine, must be tedious, but building more and more prisons must not be the answer, other solutions can be found.
- (135) More treatment programs and job training programs.
- (136) More treatment and education WITHIN prison walls. If all the money goes to prisons, it seems logical to make education and treatment available there.
- (137) If we spend money on rehabilitation or treatment programs, I think we should go for the ones that are most likely to be successful-- alcohol, drugs, more non-violent stuff.
- (138) More money needs to be allocated to substance abuse treatment both inside the prisons and while an offender is on probation and/or parole.
- (139) More money for treatment.
- (140) More funding for TREATMENT, WORK TRAINING, and BETTER SYSTEM TO CONNECT THE INCARCERATED TO THE COMMUNITY!
- (141) More focus on strengthening substance abuse addiction treatment.
- (142) Violent crimes and sex offenses deserve focus in prison while drugs and nonviolent crimes should be separated and treated.
- (143) More emphasis on education and rehabilitation.
- (144) More effort should be put towards rehabilitating prisoners and giving them opportunities to succeed in society than in 'punishing' them.
- (145) More effort needs to be made to rehabilitate the non-violent offender, especially drug related offenses.
- (146) EDUCATION AND TREATMENT ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ONLY INCARCERATION.
- (147) I would like to see more emphasis on work, treatment, counseling, and education programs so that inmates are more prepared for life when they are released back into the communities. Prison may have started out in the earliest beginnings as a punishment for being bad, but that approach no longer works. In the 21st century, criminal justice should be about holding the most violent for life, treating the non-violent without going to prison, and preparing everyone in between those 2 extremes for re-entry into the community via education sufficient to obtain employment, treatment for addictions, work- training in technical fields, and counseling for abuse suffered and behavior modification to deal with other people without engaging in conflict.
- (148) I think that the Criminal Justice System needs to focus on Rehabilitating those that are non violent offenders and also and offer more education programs while they are in prison.
- (149) It's too big! What a waste of money, especially when its impact on deterrence is questionable. More education, more treatment (inside prisons/jails and out).
- (150) IT'S OBVIOUS THAT PRISONS ARE THERE FOR ONE PURPOSE AND THAT IS TO HOUSE FELONS. WE NEED TREATMENT MONEY, PLACEMENTS, AND MORE MONEY DIRECTED TOWARDS SAFFPF BEDS AND MONEY FOR SAFFPF AFTERCARE.
- (151) Concentrate on rehabilitation of violent criminals.
- (152) I strongly support treatment and education programs for prisoners.
- (153) It should be for rehabilitation. If all the non violent/sexual criminals were rehabilitated and never came back into the system, we would save money and be safer. People deserve second chances, not just a time out, but life changes.
- (154) It needs to stop being a warehouse for humans, and rehabilitate if possible and return them to the community.

- (155) It needs to do more in rehabilitating the prisoner and lowering recidivism rates.
- (156) It is pointless to incarcerate people with drug and alcohol problems without treatment. Even involuntary treatment (forced) is some what successful.
- (157) All possibilities for educating and rehabilitating offenders should be explored and worked on, so that prisons will not be counterproductive.
- (158) It is huge and burdened with preoccupation of facilities management at the sacrifice of potential rehabilitation of individuals. Consequently it is largely unmanageable in all ways, being controlled by politicians instead of basic principles of human and legal justice. Few prisoners are given a real chance to integrate back into the positive side of the communities, businesses, and families they have been pulled apart from.
- (159) It does not rehabilitate enough and takes up too much money for incarceration.
- (160) Instead of being so harsh on crime, the TDCJ would be better served to prepare its inmates for successful reentry in order to lower recidivism rates. A close friend of mine is serving a long-term sentence in TDCJ, and very little rehabilitation is offered to the inmates. These are violent offenders who will be reentering society someday. Few chances at education and treatment programs do not improve their odds, or the odds of possible future victims.
- (161) Rehabilitation should be key.
- (162) If the TCJ would really concentrate on rehabilitating those incarcerated with educational programs, counseling, and therapy, I believe this would really rehabilitate those incarcerated. As the system is now, there is little rehabilitation and many of those who are released end up back in prison for similar offenses.
- (163) Basically, needs to focus non-violent and non-sexual offenders on treatment and rehabilitation, education and work programs.
- (164) Not enough services addressing the psychological issues/skills deficits that contribute to recidivism.
- (165) I would like to see increased education and treatment in the system.
- (166) I truly believe that if more prisoners were receiving some kind of treatment for their offenses, they would probably be lest likely to offend again.
- (167) I think the prison system is missing an enormous opportunity by not treating offenders in need of substance abuse treatment. A significant number of offenders are in prison for substance abuse or addiction related issues, whether or not it is reflected in their actual criminal charge. This would go a long way in reducing recidivism and enhancing rehabilitation while enhancing public safety. There is virtually NO funding for substance abuse education and treatment or counseling services on prison units --- a great disservice to society, the public and just foolish.
- (168) I think the main purpose of the Texas Criminal Justice System should be to rehabilitate those individuals who have committed non-violent crimes.
- (169) The Texas Criminal Justice system is spending too much money incarcerating individuals charged with nonviolent offenses. I have no doubt that spending a significant amount of time in jail can undoubtedly change a person, and not in a positive manner. It seems there is little effort made to rehabilitate these offenders.
- (170) I think the criminal justice system currently is not rehabilitating its prisoners but instead is exposing them to such a harsh environment to the extent that prisoners are more likely to be violent offenders once they are released. The criminal justice system should focus on rehabilitating its prisoners and not lock them away in this atmosphere of brutality, particularly with non-violent drug offenders.
- (171) There should be more educational/rehabilitative programs in the system to PREPARE them from when they come out.
- (172) I think that we need to focus on rehabilitation and treatment, as opposed to simple incarceration.
- (173) I think that the Texas Criminal Justice system should focus on rehabilitation and education.
- (174) I think that the Texas Criminal Justice system has a bad reputation for imprisoning and killing criminals rather than preventing future crimes. I do think that more emphasis on rehabilitation and crime deterrence would help the state, rather than just putting more people in prison.
- (175) I think that education and treatment programs are crucial to preventing criminals from committing crimes a second time.
- (176) I believe people place too high a value on punishment as a form of justice over the value of correcting

the causes of illegal and illicit behavior. More money should be spent correcting the problems and more rewards to those who can prove a higher performance at attaining corrective measures.

- (177) Education and counseling should be the primary goals of prisons, regardless of crime committed.
- (178) I believe the recidivism rate is too high and more money should be spent on treatment/education and job skill training.
- (179) There should be many more treatment programs and job training programs in prison and post-incarceration.
- (180) I strongly feel that more money should be spent on getting prisoners into treatment programs. This should be the number one concern, especially because of the large amount of money that could be saved by putting more treatment programs in place.
- (181) I highly believe in treatment vs. punishment. These people, as well as their children need mental help instead of just beating them down, making them feel less human, then sending them back out to commit the same crime after they seem to be submissive enough.
- (182) For mid-level offenders, emphasis should be on helping them make life changes that will prevent them from committing crimes in the future.
- (183) I have not been in the Texas criminal system but I do know that more money should be spent on treatment and religious activities.
- (184) We need funding for more treatment programs for drugs and sexual crimes.
- (185) I don't think that you can completely rehabilitate some offenders - violent criminals especially, but treatment and counseling can alleviate the situation somewhat. Drug treatment programs while incarcerated as well as follow-up treatment and regular contact with either a parole officer or a sponsor after release will help to prevent a relapse in drug usage (e.g. similar to AA format or other addiction programs).
- (186) I believe this system is in need of comprehensive reform. I believe that budget cuts have diminished the rehabilitative ability of prisons.
- (187) I do not think any more money should be used to build more prisons. That should be the last thing we spend our money on. Instead we need to focus our attention and expenses on rehabilitating offenders and then offering proper treatment programs once they have completed their stay in jail to continue the rehabilitation process.
- (188) I tend to believe in more education, more treatment, and more humane thinking about prisoners.

- Counseling is not a panacea. While it may help some people, ordering everybody to do it is a waste of our money. It should be offered, but on a more selective case-by-case basis, with money not being the primary consideration when deciding if a criminal needs counseling. If we can prevent criminals from going to jail again, we'll save even more money.
- Chemical dependency is a known medical problem, and yet our justice system considers addiction a crime. Based on the recidivism rate for alcohol/drug offenders, clearly the system of 'punishing' these offenders and the limited treatment programs are ineffective. To truly address this issue, more funding needs to be allocated to treatment options that actually work (unlike programs such as SMART or SAF-P).
- I disagree with the idea that treatment as an alternative to incarceration is a valid option. The drug court/mental health court system is a nightmare. For one's attorney, the DA, and the judge to team up and decide what's best for one defeats the whole adversarial nature of our judicial system. One's liberty should never depend on medication compliance or treatment compliance.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

- (1) While visiting an inmate at Michaels Unit, he told me that he made more money selling drugs than any educational program could promise him and said that when he got out of prison, he would go back to selling drugs. He went through our 'Mentor' program and accepted Christ as his savior and he was a changed man from that time on. I was mentoring him for 9 years. Inmates have to have a change from within or no educational program will ever take the place of making thousands in drugs.
- (2) Instead of being so harsh on crime, the TDCJ would be better served to prepare its inmates for successful reentry in order to lower recidivism rates. A close friend of mine is serving a long-term sentence in TDCJ, and very little rehabilitation is offered to the inmates. These are violent offenders who will be reentering society someday. Few chances at education and treatment programs do not improve their odds, or the odds of possible future victims.
- (3) Having family and friends in prison has given me a different perspective on the criminal justice system. I am also a doctoral student so I understand many of political and social ramifications of the CJ system and those involved in it. The thing I hate the most is that the system is such that it sets up the prisoner for failure outside of prison--becoming a productive citizen is nearly impossible because you can't really get loan money for an education, and many schools may not take you for having been in prison--depending on your crime. So, what's the point of getting to the outside? I think providing education that is valid outside of prison --not those certificate programs from Burro Tech that will not count at all--get degree granting institutions that mean something in the real world to provide an equitable education--to provide hope to prisoners inside so that they can CHANGE FOR THE BETTER and offer them a REAL CHANCE FOR SUCCESS once they are outside.
- (4) As an educator, I believe that every effort should be made to educate these folks in the three R's and beyond, and in life skills that are necessary to functioning in society. They need to come out with the tools to succeed at normal life. Given that 95% of these folks return to normal life, it is vital to give them health care and education to keep society safe from disease and more crime.
- (5) Because I work as an educator in the prison system and see offenders with potential and talent, I feel that many of them would benefit from more programs such as education and therapeutic programs. At the state jail level, the educational and counseling programs are very sparse.
- (6) For nonviolent or non-distributing criminals, education is key.
- (7) Education is a wonderful thing, though I'm not quite convinced the TCJ is too encouraging to its charges.
- (8) More treatment and educational opportunities for inmates at every level and type of correctional institution.
- (9) Prisoners should all be participating in educational programs and not watching television or sitting around idle. The only way to reduce recidivism is to give people enough skills and hope to make a life for themselves that is worth staying off drugs and out of trouble to maintain.
- (10) Education is needed, Windham is not. Faith-based programs that have spirituality and cognitive basis work- secular programs do not have near the effectiveness.
- (11) More educational programs and recreational activities.
- (12) While the TCJ has little or no influence over schooling, it can at the least direct all its possible efforts toward educating those individuals over whom it does have some influence.
- (13) They need to eliminate the age limit on education, paid while an inmate is going to school.
- (14) A top priority should be to lead every capable prisoner to a GED and beyond. The statistical correlation between more education and less crime is too great to ignore.
- (15) Education should take priority over jobs that compete with the non-prison economy and job training should occur within the parameters of traditional prison industries.
- (16) More education will drop recidivism and increase ex-offenders' ability to obtain a better job.
- (17) Please reduce recidivism rates by treatment and education so people have a perspective when they

come out.

- (18) I would like to see increased education and treatment in the system.
- (19) It should be mandatory that young offenders receive intense drug/alcohol treatment and counseling as well as an education while they are incarcerated.
- (20) I believe that more money, time, and effort should be spent on educating, treating, and preparing prisoners for a successful re-entry into society.
- (21) Once they are in prison more efforts should be made at educating prisoners so they can return to society reformed.
- (22) I think since many of the defendants have not graduated from high school they should be given the chance to take courses while incarcerated.
- (23) I would like to see a greater emphasis on education for prisoners and the general public; hopefully that would eventually lessen the number of prisoners in the system.
- (24) I feel very strongly that prison should be a punishment. There should not be entertainment options like TV or computers; the money currently spent on these things should go to prisoner education and treatment programs. Finishing high school would probably be a pretty attractive option if there wasn't anything else to do.
- (25) More education and treatment, and less television would be better for anyone.
- (26) I strongly support treatment and education programs for prisoners.
- (27) We shouldn't waste our tax dollars on providing people that have committed violent or sexual crimes with luxuries and amenities. Give them the basics because prison is not meant to be enjoyed, it is a place for people to realize the horrible impacts of their actions, and rework themselves to become better people. So, cut down on television, music, and other outside influences. Instead, allow the prisoners time to read, write, draw, learn, and communicate, so they can get more in touch with themselves.
- (28) There should be many more treatment programs and job training programs in prison and post-incarceration.
- (29) Just think of how much money would be saved if you took all the TV's out of the prisons. And who knows...that might be a good deterrent these days seeing how many hours people spend watching TV. Give them a paper to read instead and if they can't read...teach them to read.
- (30) We need to lower the number of persons incarcerated. We have the highest percentage in the world. This is disgraceful. Education and treatment programs are essential. Funding for education, inside and outside of prison, is a disgrace to my nation. Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions.
- (31) If you don't increase their educational level, your chance of reducing recidivism is much less.
- (32) If you spend the money to educate, and make it the way it use to be ...mandatory to get your GED and give them something to take pride in and more people on the outside to hire them.
- (33) If the TCJ would really concentrate on rehabilitating those incarcerated with educational programs, counseling, and therapy, I believe this would really rehabilitate those incarcerated. As the system is now, there is little rehabilitation and many of those who are released end up back in prison for similar offenses.
- (34) All possibilities for educating and rehabilitating offenders should be explored and worked on, so that prisons will not be counterproductive.
- (35) We need it to continue protecting, teaching, rehabilitating the criminal population.
- (36) We do need more education and treatment.
- (37) I believe that they should have access to counseling and education because many of them are there because of a lack of education and a lack of a social need of one kind or another.
- (38) We can't continue to do the same old things & expect better results. More treatment, more education.
- (39) I think that the system perpetuates criminality in our society by neglecting the education, mental health, and safety of prisoners, thereby creating a perpetual criminal class and high recidivism rates. The solution is to focus on education and rehabilitation, and neither can be accomplished when prisoners are more likely to find drugs and violence IN prison than in the outside world.
- (40) We already know that as the system stands, recidivism rates are appalling. We definitely need to focus on treatment and education, if only because nothing else has worked.
- (41) I would really like to see more education offered to inmates, I feel that this would help them the day

the walk out of prison.

- (42) I think that the Texas Criminal Justice system should focus on rehabilitation and education.
- (43) Education & counseling for the offender and family, particularly their children is very important as well. I'm a taxpayer, I'm tired of seeing more jails go up, I want my tax dollars to go towards early intervention counseling & treatment.
- (44) Treatment and education are the only way to stop the cycle of incarceration.
- (45) Treating the underlying behavioral issues and educating prisoners/probationers about dysfunctional behaviors could help these individuals to create better lives in the future.
- (46) Like so many other areas, not enough money for prison programs and education.
- (47) Give prisoners more education, more drug-treatment, and more chances to not become prisoners again.
- (48) Prisoners should have more access to religious and educational services.
- (49) There are too many prisoners with no opportunity to better themselves or their families while incarcerated. Crime should be punished yet we need to find a better method of determining how to handle or correct the problem of how a person went wrong. Education and rehabilitation of prisoners should be top priority to stop a person from returning to prison.
- (50) Education and rehabilitation are often ignored.
- (51) The State needs to spend money educating and rehabilitating prisoners in the hopes that the cycle of violence and substance abuse ends.
- (52) We need a better system, with more alternatives, and higher education.
- (53) Prisoners need education.
- (54) The key is to reduce recidivism. Education, rehab, healthcare and visitation from family and friends all directly result in recidivism reduction. We must move from simple incarceration and punishment back towards rehabilitation.
- (55) Education and counseling should be the primary goals of prisons, regardless of crime committed. Education is the key.
- (56) In prison education should be improved.
- (57) The focus of incarceration should be less about locking people up to keep them off the streets and more about rehabilitating people and particularly giving them education opportunities.
- (58) The current TX criminal justice system embodies waste of public resources in terms of valuable human lives as well as public funding. Texas ought to reallocate its prison funding to education and treatment for people both in and out of the prison system.
- (59) Through observations of my own and several experiences I believe that treatment and education is the key.
- (60) More treatment and education WITHIN prison walls. If all the money goes to prisons, it seems logical to make education and treatment available there.
- (61) TDCJ should continue to emphasize the Cognitive Intervention and the CHANGES programs for all inmates.
- (62) TDCJ needs to provide many more programs for education and rehabilitation rather than just housing offenders. TDCJ also needs to provide positive reinforcement for those offenders that are trying to succeed. There is very little positive reinforcement and no attempt to provide education options for those that would like to break away from gangs within the system.
- (63) TDCJ needs to be updated to the 'times'. Allow gameboys with educational games. Get rid of the phone system so families can stay in contact. What we are doing is not working at all. Repeat offenders are not 'afraid' of going to jail. Let's use their time to make them take classes.
- (64) MORE TIME & MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT TOWARD EDUCATION & REFORM FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS.
- (65) More education for prisoners.
- (66) Prisoners need counseling and education in order that they improve their lives.
- (67) Wider use of volunteer groups for education.
- (68) Education should be greatly expanded to allow those charged with crimes to become a contributing member of a society which cares about them.
- (69) People need to be educated. Offer incentives for prisoners as they complete more educational

programs. Teach courses on non-violence. Let them read Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Thoreau. Build them back up instead of tearing them down even more. I don't like the idea of using reform programs that are based on religious or militaristic values and ideals.

- (70) Instead of taking good time away from felons they should have all sorts of mandatory programs they have to attend while in prison and completing these classes successfully. Then have a structured program when they are paroled.
- (71) It's too big! What a waste of money, especially when its impact on deterrence is questionable. More education, more treatment (inside prisons/jails and out).
- (72) More educational opportunities.
- (73) Most importantly, I think more money should be spent educating prisoners. I assume that many of them do not even have high school diplomas. I think crime can be prevented if people believed that they had a chance of upward mobility rather than a life of crime and education is the first step towards improving someone's life. Even helping prisoners get a high school education would be an improvement.
- (74) More emphasis on education and rehabilitation.
- (75) More education! Require them to learn difficult subjects like law, medicine, or engineering. They will not merge in with society if they have to go back to lesser opportunities.
- (76) More education needed to stop the increase in the prison population.
- (77) More education and preparation for returning into society.
- (78) EDUCATION AND TREATMENT ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ONLY INCARCERATION.
- (79) There should be more educational/rehabilitative programs in the system to PREPARE them from when they come out.
- (80) It's a shame that such a great state and nation as a whole still have such a high incidence of violent crime and general apathy shown towards other people. I'd say that most crimes against people and property show a lack of respect for other people's way of life and belongings. I believe the best way to begin a gradual but permanent change in this attitude is to not only improve education for youths and already-incarcerated prisoners, but also to promote positive values through strong families.
- (81) I think the education of the inmates should push them to new levels of awareness. By reading classic literature mixed with modern high-interest literature, they would perhaps see themselves and their tragedies in these stories. If they could delve into these works, perhaps they would begin to understand the human soul and in particular, their own. Since many inmates are illiterate, you could start out with simple books and work up to high-interest, and then jump into literature. (Maybe have several different classes they could choose for themselves.) Have them keep journals about what they are reading. Hire teachers that are energetic and positive about teaching inmates. Include basic test-taking skills to help them get GEDs or pass whatever tests they need to take.
- (82) I think that education and treatment programs are crucial to preventing criminals from committing crimes a second time.
- (83) I tend to believe in more education, more treatment, and more humane thinking about prisoners.
- (84) I think recidivism rates would be lower if prisoners were more educated. Many of these prisoners come from abusive families and, in my opinion, recidivism rates would also decrease if prisoners felt that they had something to offer or were of some value to society.
- (85) I think Prisoners should have the opportunity to further their education, with teachers on site or through mail order and be able to have cassette/cd players to help KEEP THEM FROM REPEATING.
- (86) I think more money needs to be spent on trying to help prisoners be prepared to re-enter society. As in, education programs.
- (87) I think it is a shame to have so much money being spent with very little accomplished. People do not become rehabilitated without an education.
- (88) I recommend the Texas Criminal Justice System place more emphasis on educating and instructing the incarcerated rather than merely placing them in prison. Putting law-breakers in prison only temporarily solves the problems – it is a short-term success.
- (89) There should definitely be more educational training for youth offenders to make sure they get on the

right path.

- (90) I can't stress enough the need for education, everyone knows with a more educated society there is no need for so many prisons.
- (91) For those who just turned down the wrong path in prison, give them hope, give them an education. If they are going to be loose on the streets, show them the honest way. If they feel like a competent, educated and confident adult (as much as possible depending on the crime of course), they are more likely to take the right path.
- (92) I don't think we should use prisons to 'throw away' people. I think more emphasis needs to be placed on rehab, education and treatment. The problem of crime and prisoners is not going to go away until we fix the root of the problem ... adding more prisons is only a band-aid solution. Help these men and women turn their lives around, whenever possible. That is the greatest good we can do.
- (93) I would like to see more treatment units with a cooperation between treatment and education, which is the case at the Johnston Unit.

VOCATIONAL/TRAINING PROGRAMS

- (1) Do job training while in jail, teach a trade.
- (2) More funding for TREATMENT, WORK TRAINING, and BETTER SYSTEM TO CONNECT THE INCARCERATED TO THE COMMUNITY!
- (3) Prisons should be run to rehabilitate and to provide valuable skills so that prisoners can have a better chance of succeeding once they get out.
- (4) More treatment programs and job training programs.
- (5) The state needs to help the criminal learn to live and work in society and not just house them.
- (6) The Texas system needs a lot of changes teaching inmates a craft for starters. There's a lot of talent in prison that could be used to teach others.
- (7) Ensure prisoners as well as probationers have a trade which will support them legally.
- (8) Far too much emphasis on incarceration and not even remotely close to enough given to rehabilitation and vocational training.
- (9) In regards to work programs...a great deal of satisfaction and self pride can be gained through completed work projects. The probability is high that the offenders in prison never had any positive role models or environment. I have had many young men working for me, in the construction business, that were on probation or parole. Often times I had to call for clearance to take them to work in another county. Several of these young men are in management today for large companies and at the very least...most of them learned skills to support themselves and their families. Their indiscretions ranged from drug use, to stolen cars, to breaking and entering, and involuntary man slaughter. Most of these individuals wind up in some type of skilled trade or construction labor. That being said, it would be money well spent to get them started in that direction early on.
- (10) Focus on teaching Trades, and building up the work opportunities for people releasing from prison or state jails with felonies.
- (11) Once people are in prison, then we have a responsibility to help them too. Either you educated them before prison or you need to give them skills while they're there too.
- (12) WE NEED EARLY INTERVENTION, DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAMS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING.
- (13) I would like to see more programs available to really help persons formerly incarcerated integrate back into society. Especially, for non-violent crimes. It can be very discouraging when you have rehabilitated and changed your life, and still are unable to obtain employment suitable to take care of your family.
- (14) The TCJS is creating more dangerous criminals. They learn more about crime while in prison instead of a working trade.
- (15) If we are going to incarcerate people, then they should be provided with training so that they will have job skills when they exit prison.
- (16) In jails I feel the goal of the system is in education such that the person can hold down a stable job

upon exiting the system (which should reduce the recidivism rates). The system does not currently motivate inmates to improve themselves in substantial ways.

- (17) Warehousing people in jail, where they are in contact with other offenders and can share ideas and make contacts about crime, and then releasing them into the workforce without adequate transition assistance is not the answer - the economics of this situation alone increase the likelihood that they will offend once again. Treatment, training, and work programs to enable people to make an effective transition to a productive working life will cost much less money and reduce crime in the long run.
- (18) More training and personal growth programs are needed.
- (19) I think prisoners should be busy learning things that will be useful to them when they are out.
- (20) Need job skill development.
- (21) Positive training and treatment.
- (22) Every effort should be made to rehabilitate through mental health services, job skills training, etc.

EDUCATION & TRAINING PROGRAMS

- (1) In visiting a friend who has been in prison for about a year now, I've noticed that there are no work programs for him to participate in other than kitchen work and sweeping the sidewalks. Before he became involved with drugs, he was a hardworking college student and very responsible. It seems that some type of college classes or a useful work program would have had a better chance at rehabilitation.
- (2) I think that the prison system needs change. Big Change. With this type of change this will help so many other areas that need fixing. We need to be Smart on Crime and train and educate the employees and inmates. Know that all of you are in my prayers.
- (3) An educated man uses his skills to earn his living. An uneducated man is much more likely to turn to crime. Educate these prisoners. Teach them a trade and give them a second chance at being a contributing and productive member of our society.
- (4) Education, therapy along with job training are the best help for criminal thinking. When people are educated or trained to a profession, they are less likely to do crimes.
- (5) Education and work training should be the main priorities when dealing with non-violent, non-sexual offenders.
- (6) It is clear, and research supports this, that simply locking people up for x number of years and then releasing them and expecting them to suddenly conform to the norms and expectations of a society that they have been estranged from, with no support or guidance, is folly. Ideally, we would develop a system to identify these people and their circumstances and stop the cycle before it starts. However, that does nothing for those who are already involved in it; the 95% that will return to society. We can make a difference in what happens to these people! But we have to provide them with the resources- this means intervention through intensive, dedicated, and knowledgeable experts on a variety of issues. This means mental health care, physical health care, drug treatment, educational and vocational training. This means an investment. This means changes-big time changes! And of course, this means money. We have to find people willing to have the courage to do this and the creativity to make it happen.
- (7) Prevention of future crime should be the goal. Offering these people education and employment is necessary so that their probation will be successful.
- (8) Texas should try harder to keep people out of prison in the first place. We need to focus on education, treatment and job skills. But if we must incarcerate some, let's give them the education, treatment and job skills they need so that when they do re-enter society, they can be successful. Our current system is shameful!
- (9) Hire people who are more interested in providing educational opportunities -- i.e., vocational training or basic education classes.
- (10) Attempt to provide prison as a means for rehabilitating members of society to re-honor the ideals of the 'social contract' through work, compassion, teamwork, art, wisdom, and knowledge. Console the members, have them work as teams, and respect other people, treat them as equals but don't let do

the 'morally wrong'... its better to redeem these people than to punish them.

- (11) It is futile to simply punish criminals for their crimes with no attempt to teach them skills and actions appropriate for life in a free society. Money should be spent on education/training programs.
- (12) I feel that there should be more emphasis on educating and vocational training for inmates, as well as programs for inmates to help the community out such as making moldings for handicap children to walk, dentures, etc., and these types of inmates who take advantage of such programs should be paroled with a job with someone of such trades. Make it less chance of them returning to their old life and prison and in turn prisoner's who have children will be supported with child support. As it stands now, prisoner's are required to look for work and are only hired by people to do hard labor, thus prisoner's are returning to their old life style and returning to prison.
- (13) I feel that the more training programs that inmates have access to in order to give them marketable skills while incarcerated would help them to re-integrate into society. I feel that every prisoner that will be re-integrated should be trained in a trade or skill, and perhaps given the opportunity to take college level courses. All prisoners entering the system without high school diplomas should be mandated to get their GED or otherwise finish that diploma.
- (14) I think that the Criminal Justice System needs to focus on Rehabilitating those that are non violent offenders and also offer more education programs while they are in prison. I also think that the Texas Criminal System should have special jobs for work release that prisoners get a certain amount for while they are in prison so when they get out they can have some money to try to start an honest living.
- (15) Vocational training and basic education needs to be addressed.
- (16) More effort should be spent on criminal rehabilitation, education, and work training to turn them into productive members of society.
- (17) I like to think that education, including helping people get a GED, and/or learn a skill/trade while in prison would also be helpful when they are released.
- (18) If TCJD continues to handle non-violent, non-serial cases, they should have a different focus for these cases and it should be doing what's needed to help these people live better lives and contribute to the world. Psychiatric care, counseling, education, good support from a caring person, life skills training, job skills training – whatever's needed to motivate people to do better for themselves. If this approach is outside the realm of 'criminal justice,' then there needs to be another agency to do the work.
- (19) I feel that educational improvements and training for prisoners would make a big impact on recidivism.
- (20) I am fully in support of broader educational opportunities for inmates, and I believe state officials should also help inmates leaving prison to get jobs and schooling because it is so difficult, especially for those with a felony record, and the time and money spent in these pursuits would most likely reduce recidivism as well. For someone who has spent months or years locked up, it is very difficult to reenter the 'real world,' and some return to crime because they are not accustomed to and cannot handle the pressures of society. It would be incredibly beneficial to at least guide them in the right direction.
- (21) Basically, needs to focus non-violent and non-sexual offenders on treatment and rehabilitation, education and work programs.
- (22) Those who are in prison or on probation need to be in programs that address their problem whether it be drugs, anger issues, etc. Many lack life skills because they missed out on this training and/or education. Programs need to address skills for getting a job, interacting with people on the job and maintaining their job.
- (23) The Texas prisons could learn a lot from the Federal Prison System. The Feds have some best practices that are highly successful, as it relates to educational and vocational work programs.
- (24) Far too many men and women are doing time without proper assistance to make sure they have all the tools and knowledge to succeed when they are freed.
- (25) The only way to reduce crime to educate and rehabilitate prisoners. If somebody has no job skills or education, there is no way they can make a life for themselves when they are released. This is the ONLY thing that will prevent people from going to prison or re-entering the prison system once they

are released.

- (26) TDCJ is too dedicated to punishment and to promoting a 'plantation mentality' from top down. Our prison system should be an educational system run like a good 'rich man's' summer camp, or orphanage, permeated with appropriate educational programs, excellent recreational facilities, and far reaching opportunities for hobbies and independent study with commercial outlets throughout the state for sale of literary endeavors and arts and crafts. All prisoners (except the criminally insane) should have the hope of 'working their way' out of prison.
- (27) I believe TDC does a good job. I feel the education in these facilities could be upgraded and more post-incarceration training is need so these people can learn a trade while in jail.
- (28) Providing more education and job opportunities (including education and incentive for employers) for felons and working to remove the barriers that effectively ban felons from a huge portion of the job market will allow for much more successful re-entry and lower recidivism rates.
- (29) Rehab, education, religious, and work opportunities in prisons are of the most value to a prisoner.
- (30) Quit trying to make prison comfortable for inmates and start making it punishment. they could still have access to job skills, education and treatment, but not television and candy!
- (31) I believe my tax dollars should be spent on a correctional facility that corrects and rehabilitates its inmates. This would be best accomplished with a military style facility. This facility would consist of intense physical activity, team work drill, discipline, and education. A boot camp style facility would create an environment that being the disciplined, strong, team leader would be 'cool' and would increase self esteem by overcoming obstacles. Pair that with an education system that teaches a tech skill such plumbing, electronics, auto repair, etc and you will have rehabilitated inmates that hope, direction and a tangible skill to contribute to society and the economy. If you have any questions you can contact me at derek884@hotmail.com.
- (32) Increase educational and vocational programming for both inmates and probationers.
- (33) Programs that educate, teach a trade, help through therapy, and drug treatment programs are the best solution to control our increasingly high recidivism rate. Radical change is needed. What we are doing now in the prison system is not working and is going to get worse. The women population will continue to increase. Women are increasingly and alarmingly becoming more violent in society.
- (34) Knowing that most who enter the prison system, at some point in time will re-enter into society, education and job training is the easiest way for them to fit into society and to stop them from living off of the system. Without an education or job training/placement it is easy to fall back into situations in which crimes may be committed.
- (35) If we could help educate/retrain prisoners--instead of worrying over whether they get time to work out or watch tv--I think that would be a much better use of state dollars.
- (36) Most sentences should be shortened and the death penalty replaced with a life or a long sentence. Use the money saved for prevention (education, job training, mental health and drug treatment programs) and rehabilitation and education in prison.
- (37) More emphasis needs to be on education and training programs for the inmates.
- (38) Making education a top priority and helping ex-prisoners find sufficient jobs are more important than having televisions and basketball courts in prisons.
- (39) Make prison members productive members of society through employment placement, education, et cetera.
- (40) I would like to see more emphasis on work, treatment, counseling, and education programs so that inmates are more prepared for life when they are released back into the communities. Prison may have started out in the earliest beginnings as a punishment for being bad, but that approach no longer works. In the 21st century, criminal justice should be about holding the most violent for life, treating the non-violent without going to prison, and preparing everyone in between those 2 extremes for re-entry into the community via education sufficient to obtain employment, treatment for addictions, work- training in technical fields, and counseling for abuse suffered and behavior modification to deal with other people without engaging in conflict.
- (41) Education and work programs are always needed, (idle time gets people in trouble).
- (42) Incarceration facilities should be places of rehabilitation, not punishment. A dog hit on the nose is aware that it did something wrong, but doesn't know what unless show what it is supposed to do.

Learning is learning no matter the species. Animals, including humans, are more likely to learn and make permanent changes from positive reinforcement rather than negative reinforcement. I think these individuals should be given the opportunity to earn their G.E.D., have access to books, and mentors - maybe other former prisoners that have been able to hold a job for more than a year - to help them find a craft that they are good at, so that they don't have to return to the life they were involved in previously.

- (43) I think it is important to educate people, with specific focus on continuing education and teaching trades.
- (44) I believe the recidivism rate is too high and more money should be spent on treatment/education and job skill training.

RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS

- (1) Without compromising security, we need a much stronger program to rehabilitate offenders and prepare them for reentry. the aftercare available is generally poor and can undo everything that was accomplished by incarceration. It is the 'follow through of the swing' that hits the ball over the fence. Our follow-up needs serious improvement.
- (2) We need to deal with the 95% who will get out and reduce the 65% recidivism, by spending more money on probation, parole case management {drug courts in Houston is one example} to guide ex-offenders back into society. We need to support them in finding jobs and a place to live to achieve some stability to help prevent them going back to the 'old ways'!
- (3) I recommend that more emphasis be put on re-introducing prisoners into society once they are out of prison. I do believe that there should be a position specifically created to assist the prisoner in the transition. To me, the parole officer is associated with a negative image, one that must be reported to in order to make sure the prisoner is not doing anything wrong. By having a different, more positive authority figure, it may ease the prisoner back into society more successfully.
- (4) Everyone benefits from a program that seeks to encourage criminals not to commit crimes while at the same time providing opportunities and alternatives when they leave the prison. These are people with real problems and that need help.
- (5) We need to utilize the Faith community and its volunteers to the fullest extent to work with offenders in areas of rehabilitation and community aftercare programs.
- (6) Need as many classes and training for re-entry to society to be able to get jobs.
- (7) We need a major overhaul. more effort should be put into reintegration for formerly incarcerated people that includes employment and housing.
- (8) Warehousing people in jail, where they are in contact with other offenders and can share ideas and make contacts about crime, and then releasing them into the workforce without adequate transition assistance is not the answer - the economics of this situation alone increase the likelihood that they will offend once again. Treatment, training, and work programs to enable people to make an effective transition to a productive working life will cost much less money and reduce crime in the long run.
- (9) Spending on Post-Prison reintegration programs should be increased.
- (10) Too geared for punishment. Most WILL get out one day and what is there for them? They are untrained, unprepared to enter society and society does not want them. Their felonies haunt them forever - no matter how well they do and more and more job opportunities for us are disappearing. Need to prepare them to re-enter.
- (11) I am fully in support of broader educational opportunities for inmates, and I believe state officials should also help inmates leaving prison to get jobs and schooling because it is so difficult, especially for those with a felony record, and the time and money spent in these pursuits would most likely reduce recidivism as well. For someone who has spent months or years locked up, it is very difficult to reenter the 'real world,' and some return to crime because they are not accustomed to and cannot

handle the pressures of society. It would be incredibly beneficial to at least guide them in the right direction.

- (12) More funding for better monitoring once they leave the facility is important. Social services should be involved in making sure a person upon release who needs psychiatric medications and services has them to reduce the likelihood of re-offence.
- (13) There should be more programs available that help prisoners reintegrate back into society after they have served their time.
- (14) There needs to be an employers list available so the returnees can contact these employers BEFORE they reenter into society and be assured of employment.
- (15) It should learn from other countries that have crime rates much lower than Texas does. The present system is outdated in many ways and needs serious changes so that prisoners can return to the society and become 'useful' citizens.
- (16) Job placement programs can help these offenders stand on their own and become productive citizens in society. No man/woman is a lost cause as long as enough is willing to be done to help that person.
- (17) I believe there should be more emphasis given to reintegrate an incarcerated person into the outside world.
- (18) I believe it would be wise to begin to spend money on treatment programs when a prisoner begins to show true effort to change their lives and thinking around, then sent to a unit where extensive treatment for the area of concern can be taught, therefore better preparing them to return to society. It would be very important at this point to have them the closest to their families as possible. This would better enhance their possible success as they work 'with' their family and the program toward coming home. Furthermore helping to focus on job/career once released. WIN WIN for everyone!
- (19) The numbers prove the unemployed and uneducated are more likely to be convicted of a crime in their lifetime, and, moreover, people released from prison often times end up going back--more money for education (across the board) and more work placement after release and job training while their in jail.
- (20) The current system of incarceration without providing access to job training programs, substance abuse treatment, etc. and then releasing the offender back into society without adequate resources to obtain a stable residence or adequate employment is setting the offenders up for failure. Money would be better spent in developing transition centers to assist offenders in returning to the free world.
- (21) Start a process of review of persons in prison currently for nonviolent crimes and begin to release them with assistance, clearing their records.
- (22) The halfway houses they have are big jokes. Those facilities need to be investigated as they tend to keep the ex-offender from working jobs due to 'curfews'. There needs to be training, housing, education, employment (one-stop) that will work with these individuals to help them be successful.
- (23) TDCJ should spend more money on rehab & reentry issues. TDCJ should contract treatment to professionals and increase SAFP, TTC, aftercare funding and pre diem rates associated with those contracts. TDCJ is pushing treatment out, by underfunding these programs they are killing them silently.
- (24) Spending on new prisons is unacceptable - more money must be used on treatment programs and re-entry programs.
- (25) Since inmates earn no money, they are denied the means to set-up a new life: housing, clothing, transportation, telephone, food - all of which are mandatory to secure and maintain a job. Without a reasonable amount of funds they are destined to return to the environment they were in when they got into crime, thus destined to return to prison. AT PRESENT: the system seems set up to ENSURE they do NOT make it. With all the money that comes in through the industries with free labor from inmates - it is incomprehensible to me that the inmates earn nothing for a lot of very hard labor. Other states pay their inmates; why doesn't Texas?
- (26) The TCJS should prevent individuals from committing the same crime after been released into back into society. Individuals should be carefully monitored, especially when the end of their sentence nears, to assure that they are safe to return to society.
- (27) Re-integration and re-habilitation does not exist behind the prison walls making TDCJ mission statement false.

- (28) Job placement post incarceration is of great value.
- (29) Rather than focusing just on visitation, my opinion/recommendation is that more evidence-based family support programs for families of incarcerated persons would have a significant impact on transition, re-entry and recidivism when the family members and the incarcerated persons are involved together.
- (30) More funding for TREATMENT, WORK TRAINING, and BETTER SYSTEM TO CONNECT THE INCARCERATED TO THE COMMUNITY!
- (31) More support for the inmate heading back into society.
- (32) More aftercare programs
- (33) Make prison members productive members of society through employment placement, education, et cetera.
- (34) Without an education or job training/ placement it is easy to fall back into situations in which crimes may be committed.
- (35) There needs to be a better linkage to the outside world for people coming out of prison. The re-entry process is very generic and sets the individual coming out up for failure.
- (36) I would like to see more re-entry programs - in fact, every person should have the opportunity to have help with re-entry - this is just as much for the public as it is for the offender - how can people not return to prison without some opportunities to change their lives?
- (37) There should be many more treatment programs and job training programs in prison and post-incarceration.
- (38) I would support separation of violent and repeat offenders from non-violent and first-time offenders, with the violent being punished and the others having shorter, treatment-based programs. Perhaps with some of the money saved on these shorter sentences, it could be put into job placement and support groups for these people after they are released.
- (39) I don't think that you can completely rehabilitate some offenders - violent criminals especially, but treatment and counseling can alleviate the situation somewhat. Drug treatment programs while incarcerated as well as follow-up treatment and regular contact with either a parole officer or a sponsor after release will help to prevent a relapse in drug usage (e.g. similar to AA format or other addiction programs).
- (40) I believe we should take more steps to reduce recidivism by working with inmates when they re-enter society rather than looking for a reason to send them back to prison. I believe we should provide more counseling (psychiatric and vocational) to inmates to ease their transition into society.
- (41) I believe the state could even offer them a job that would pay a small salary their last year in prison.
- (42) Why, when someone is released should they have to be driven back to Huntsville for release? Why not release them from the Unit they are housed in? Think of the money that would be saved by the State, plus the additional hardship of the person being released and the hardship of his/her family having to drive such a distance to get their loved one. Computers do work and the release could be generated and handled by each unit.
- (43) I do not think any more money should be used to build more prisons. That should be the last thing we spend our money on. Instead we need to focus our attention and expenses on rehabilitating offenders and then offering proper treatment programs once they have completed their stay in jail to continue the rehabilitation process.

2. How fair and responsive are TDCJ's offender classification, grievance, and disciplinary hearings process? How could they be improved?

OFFENDER CLASSIFICATION

We did not receive any comments about this issue.

OFFENDER GRIEVANCE PROCESS

- (1) Every grievance is found in favor of the guard or the prison system.
- (2) Grievance system is biased against offenders.
- (3) The Grievance System for prisoners is a joke.
- (4) The grievance system, top to bottom, is a joke. It is a 'good 'ol boy' system with very little opportunity for an inmate to bring and prosecute a grievance.
- (5) There should be a way to complain about TDCJ employees who are hateful or cruel without fearing repercussion.
- (6) We need an outside agency to oversee the grievance process it is too one-sided as it is.

DISCIPLINARY HEARING PROCESS

- (1) Cases brought before the SYSTEM COURT are not given the proper care and concern for the inmate. Thus it is a KANGAROO COURT SYSTEM!
- (2) I also think the Ombudsman's Office in Texas is the worst I have seen out of many different states, they do NOT work very well for the inmate.

3. How adequate are TDCJ's hiring processes and policies, including background checks and correctional officer eligibility standards in ensuring that TDCJ correctional officers are qualified?

HIRING & PAY / ELIGIBILITY / TRAINING FOR CO'S

STAFF PAY

- (1) By treating prisoners with more dignity and respect (allowing them more personal items and freedoms - with the exception of weights), and by better training AND PAYING the corrections officers, a less hostile and more rehabilitative environment can be created, resulting in people better prepared emotionally to re-enter society.
- (2) Hire good people to run the prisons and pay them accordingly.
- (3) Low standards for hiring guards have resulted in 'children' being hired to work in high

- security prisons. We get what we pay for.
- (4) Prison administrators and staff must be better trained to meet the needs of their charges and the public at large, and these staff should be compensated fairly.
 - (5) Better pay/training for prison staff members.
 - (6) I believe that more money should be spent on raising the salary of correctional officers and on the training of new officers.
 - (7) I think we need to offer pay raises for prison staff and improving security within the prison.
 - (8) Increase pay raises for chaplains and employees.
 - (9) Much more money needs to be spent on salaries and training for staff.
 - (10) TDCJ is currently understaffed and some funding should go towards employee retention and recruiting.
 - (11) The state needs to pay a decent wage to get a professional staff. It needs to cut down on administrators and add more officers - then make them do their job professionally.

STAFF TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

- (1) One thing for sure, the bilingual expertise of the prison staff and members of the Texas Criminal Justice System should be in parity to the high incidence of Spanish-speaking prisoners.
- (2) Guards are not trained to handle the various personalities and some use the position to flaunt their freedom and not provide a role model for the prisoner.
- (3) I have been a volunteer chaplain in the TDCJ for about 10 years. I find it more difficult to deal with staff officers than with the offenders. Officers are hard to deal with and seldom provide much assistance. They come across as doing what they have to rather than being helpful to volunteers.
- (4) I think guards should be paid better which will result in a lower turnover of prison staff. I went to school for four years and got a degree in Criminal Justice/Corrections. When I started out at the Federal Prison I was paid the exact same as someone off the street. That's sure not an incentive to get an education I don't think.
- (5) The Texas Prison System should take more time in evaluating their Corrections Officers. The abuse they serve out to prisoners is unfair and unneeded in most cases. We can never expect to reintegrate our Friends/Family back into society successfully if they are treated like animals.
- (6) The system needs to demand more professionalism of its employees. There is widespread abuse and crime amongst the prison staff that is tolerated by administrators.
- (7) Their top priority should be about training and adequate recruitment for their employees, the current state of affairs is deplorable.
- (8) The current system strongly supports criminal culture. Focus should be on rehabilitation, treatment, correcting social inequalities, eliminating poverty, supporting families to be together, providing sustainable ways for single mothers to care for their families. Training in alternatives to violence should be standard for police, prison guards, and everyone.
- (9) More training for officers, esp. anger management.
- (10) Too much emphasis on security and not enough on trying to build up the staff so that successful programs can prosper.
- (11) The screening process to become a CO in a prison fails, the rate at which CO's are being arrested and jailed is outrageous. Inmates need good examples all around them. They are clearly not getting that.
- (12) More training for staff.
- (13) There are staff who work in the Rehab & rehabilitation areas that do their jobs as professionals; yet do not get compensated properly. As wages for others goes up...theirs

- do not. Yet they are expected to do double their work loads.
- (14) The Texas criminal system is by far the poorest system in methodology and administration of their corporate culture. A better understanding of expectation by both prison personnel and the patient confined will provide the steps necessary to foster a win win situation.
 - (15) The state needs to help more with local county incarceration. The prisons and training of staff at the county level is absurd.
 - (16) The overall system needs improvements. Prisoners need education as well as staff.
 - (17) The only thing that really bothered me when I was incarcerated was that they were taking the recreation, craft shop, leather making, and education. The budget was so lean that the guards were even getting sparse. Then the only guards that did get hired (because of the pay) were off the streets of Huntsville and that only increased the drug trafficking and the sexual misconduct. I really noticed the tension in prison once all this was going on and it also gave the inmates no reason for good conduct.
 - (18) The staff need to be trained and weeded out for BAD officers, those that don't overlook when a crime is being committed, i.e., rape, drugs, beatings, as we all know that that goes on in jail.
 - (19) More education for prisoners and guards, more responsibility to the public for officials misconduct i.e.: don't allow internal investigations, offenses against prisoners are rarely prosecuted and even more rarely punished. Wardens or guards should serve at the will of the people - too many complaints and they are replaced.
 - (20) Prison employees need to be treated with greater respect to reduce turnover. Most prison officials (warden, asst. warden, major, captain, lieutenant, sergeant) have very poor supervisory skills.
 - (21) Better trained and better educated prison officials, who realize that respect and compassion accomplish much more than lack of respect and disdain for the prisoner would be a tremendous improvement.
 - (22) Expand COP's methodologies for treatment of other juvenile offenses and for adult offenders.
 - (23) Criminal Justice officials and jail and prison guards should be trained in Restorative Justice. Prisoners should be treated humanely. Jail and prison officials should be held accountable for the proper medical care and safety of the prisoners in their charge.
 - (24) Working in the prison system is extremely difficult and stressful work. I would like to see prison staff trained in such a way that they would never forget they are dealing with human beings.
 - (25) Improve guard training.
 - (26) I would highly recommend human relations classes for guards and medical personnel.
 - (27) I think that the prison system needs change. Big Change. With this type of change this will help so many other areas that need fixing. We need to be Smart on Crime and train and educate the employees and inmates. Know that all of you are in my prayers.
 - (28) I think some of the guards need to be trained and monitored better to handle the prisoners. Prison is supposed to be a punishment for a crime but also a time of rehabilitation. I was in jail for only 24 hours for a Class C Misdemeanor, but I was treated so poorly by the guards. I think this is detrimental to the rehabilitation process because the guards are creating angry people much to the likes of how dogs are trained for dog fighting. When you beat a person down and constantly scream at them and treat them like dirt, you are going to instill hatred in them. They are going to leave and take that anger out on others. The guards have every right to be forceful and disciplined towards the prisoners, but there should be a point where it gets to that. Not every time they speak or come in contact with them. All the money in the world could be put into the Criminal Justice system, but if you don't change that one aspect, you are never going to see beneficial results from the incarceration process. Thank you.
 - (29) People such as Wardens need to be held accountable.

- (30) Education and training for employees.
- (31) Those working in the prison systems need more training; these are very inefficient and unorganized.
- (32) I certainly understand that the guards/officials have to keep the prisoners behaving and in-line so as not to have problems. What I don't agree with is how ugly and mean they have to be as well as nasty and rude to visitors. The prisoners are people too. Can we possibly get more intense and better training for these guards?
- (33) The standards for correctional officers should be higher. I believe the bashing the agency is taking in the media over officer/staff criminality exemplify this point.
- (34) The guards inside the system definitely need EXTENSIVE training in handling this population.
- (35) Guards and administration need to have better training and consequences for misbehavior, some of the people outside the bars in the prison are worse than the people inside.
- (36) Guards are so ill trained and care so little about their job that they become part of the problem of trying to change a persons attitude Inmates transfer their anger to uncaring guards and become more bitter about there life. In the book for inmates, it says the inmate is to use 'yes m'am', 'no m'am', 'yes sir,' 'no sir', and cussing at guards is grounds for a 'case'. But the 'f' word is a common phase used daily by many of the guards, male and female. This conduct causes far more problems then I believe you are aware of or may be able to do any thing about. But something must be done. Tension is building in many units over this very issue. These are men and women not animals.
- (37) Stress individual accountability and responsibility not only for offenders but also supervising officers.
- (38) Training of officers should be a priority.
- (39) More upstanding employees.
- (40) Our Prison staff deserve/need more training: on recovery principles, cultural sensitivity training (especially employees from rural areas), and interpersonal dynamics/ communication strategies.
- (41) Staff is poorly educated in matters related to legal issues. Sensitivity training for staff
- (42) Train and educate officers better. Require a degree for officers. Also reduce racism amongst officers. Too many are rednecks!
- (43) Educate the hillbillies who work for TDCJ.

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- In visiting a friend who has been in prison for about a year now, I would like to say that the guards and staff at the prison facility have been very professional and courteous at each visit. I was pleasantly surprised after visiting this young man in our local county jail over a period of six to seven months.

SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION

- (1) TDCJ needs to be cleaned up on corruption. We have CO's getting away with things an inmate gets in trouble for.
- (2) TDCJ is one of the most corrupt agencies I have ever known. Prisoners are treated like objects by guards, because guards are treated that way by managers, because managers are treated that way by upper level supervisors. It is that way in ID and Parole. Ethics in this agency are non-existent. EEO violations are a way of life. People have relatives working for them, jobs promised to them when qualified applicants are ignored. Good ol'Buddy system is alive and well. Morale in the agency is at an all time low. There is no loyalty because the agency gives none.
- (3) PROSECUTION, PARDONS, PAROLE AND PROBATION ARE ALL RACIST

AND CORRUPT IN TEXAS.

- (4) Corrupt.
- (5) I think the TDCJ conglomeration is corrupt. The nepotism is rampant; therefore everyone covers everyone's back. Again, I reiterate that TDCJ is corrupt and 'Power Tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' Lord Acton Since the conglomeration of all Texas Prisons into one 'Corporation', the corruption has been horrific.
- (6) The system in Texas is corrupt and broken.
- (7) The prison industry is destroying the very purpose of prisons in society and TDCJ must urgently reassess its priorities and get rid of the endemic corruption within their employees.
- (8) I feel there is a lot of rust at all levels of the institutional division's rank & senior officers; on up to a few troublesome Unit Senior Wardens with seriously bad attitudes and disrespect to sincere prisoner to staff communications. There is still the endemic corruption at the Unit level that is ingrained; and will be difficult to eradicate.

4. How fair and responsive is TDCJ's employee grievance process? How could it be improved?

EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

We did not receive any comments about this issue.

5. How well does TDCJ provide information to offenders and offender families regarding offender status, good time credit, parole eligibility, etc.?

PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO OFFENDERS AND FAMILIES

- (1) With such a large volume of incoming calls going to the switchboard lines I feel that people don't want to hear automated machines especially when they aren't sure of a department to call. I think more access to a live person is a necessity. Communication with an incarcerated loved one is important and sometimes trying to get information is extremely difficult. I think individuals associated or employed at TDCJ need to have refresher sensitivity courses so they can at the very least sympathize with those calling trying to find an answer. My experiences with TDCJ have been very impersonal. I have found most information through the internet and through T.I.F.A., which I also found on the internet. Individuals that do not have internet access are at the mercy of these telephone lines and should not be treated any less for their affiliation with someone that is incarcerated.
- (2) I believe information on people that have been incarcerated is too difficult for family members to obtain.
- (3) The TDCJ employees on the units are evidently required to take a course on being overbearing and rude when talking on the phone to families of inmates.

- (4) The Texas Criminal Justice System needs immediate attention and reform - it is a system of vengeance and hatred for our prisoners. They are mistreating our family members and also they are in inhumane prisons with no contact with other prisoners for recreation, no educational opportunities, no churches for them inside allowed, inadequate medical attention, and brutal behavior on the part of the men who work there.
- (5) They are extremely biased with family members who make an honest mistake. They do NOT believe the truth when they WANT to believe otherwise and nothing the person says will change their mind.
- (6) As a family member visiting an offender, I have been made to feel as if I am guilty of a crime. I have not been convicted of anything. I just want to maintain a relationship with my son. Corrections officers do not have to look with such disdain on those of us who choose to visit our loved ones. It does not make us less than them.
- (7) I was employed by TDCJ for over 20 years. I found that many problems occurred - with offenders, family members and general public - because of the lack of knowledge, correct information and the failure to provide assistance to them by the staff members. Open and honest communication is needed.
- (8) Sensitivity rather than callousness should be used when dealing with people's families.
- (9) In my experience (worked and ministered in prison and with families of inmates since 1991) I think one of the most detrimental aspects of the criminal justice system is that it is not 'family friendly.' In most cases the family has not been party to the trouble a mom or dad has been in. They are often treated disrespectfully.
- (10) Once a person is incarcerated he becomes invisible, totally unavailable to loved ones. You cannot get information from departments without using the FOIA or Open Government Act, and then it is not always accurate.
- (11) Texas justice is harsher and more difficult on families. For a system that purports to be pro-family, I find that the Texas system is demeaning and impersonal towards family members who merely wish to visit their loved ones. Visitation needs to be increased along with some PR training for correctional staff who come into contact with the families. I have seen personal instances of family members who were treated as if they were criminals. We are not all inmates or criminals and all people, regardless of record, deserve to be treated with all the rights and respect protected by the U.S. Constitution.
- (12) I commend the system for the access to public information regarding the incarcerated. I use it all the time.
- (13) TDCJ is the worst agency I have ever dealt with in terms of getting public information/Open Records requests fulfilled. The Sunset Commission should do something about this.
- (14) More open information regarding individual prison units and its management.
- (15) Too difficult to get information on Parole Procedures.

TEXAS BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES

6. What changes, if any, should be made to the number of Parole Board members and commissioners, or to the size and structure the parole panels?

PAROLE MEMBERS, COMMISSIONERS, AND PANELS

- (1) There are too many inmates and not enough BPP members for them to A) vote on parole cases in a timely manner or B) take the much needed time to get to know the cases on which they are voting for possible parole...
- (2) The parole system needs MAJOR improvements, there is no way 17 people can look at over 150,000 cases for parole, it's just not possible.
- (3) The parole board is unfair; perhaps too overburdened because prisoners that deserve to be released are not. The probation and parole time is too lengthy.
- (4) Lets talk about the parole board--there are just too FEW of them to 'properly assess' the amount of inmates coming up for parole. There are NO face to face interviews conducted with the voting members, and only 5-15 min tops is spent on each review, and all that is done by looking at paper or a computer screen. How can anyone vote on whether a person is ready by reading 'paper', the answer--YOU CANNOT!
- (5) The Texas Criminal Justice System should review cases for parole more often than normal so that we give the criminal (innocent or not) a fair chance to readjust to society and get a proper education to succeed.

PAROLE OFFICER PAY & CASELOADS

- (1) I work in the parole side of the criminal justice system and have been amazed since I began at the supervision of parolees. As a parent and Texas citizen it is frightening to me that the supervision focuses on meeting paperwork deadlines more than on the actual protection of the public and rehabilitation of the offender which by the way is the mission statement of the Parole Division. It is apparent to me from my observations that officers focus much more on the paperwork than on the actual mission statement of the Division. Also it is obvious that the reason is that the many time deadlines, frequency and number of contact standards, lack of emphasis on substance abuse treatment, and agency overall emphasis on accountability rather than on working to guide and assist the offender toward a non-criminal lifestyle causes the officers to provide what I consider poor supervision. Officers' caseloads are too high for them to be able to provide any case management type services or to actually do any serious supervision of any offenders other than the Super Intensive Supervision Program offenders or sex offenders. Most officers do not have time in the working day to carry out their job duties in anything but a perfunctory manner. Officers are not paid well, have no avenues to have their state salaries significantly increased because of longevity or good job performance, and have no means of increasing their income other than promotion and those promotion salary increases are so small that promotions from officer are not enticing. To meet paperwork and computer data entry deadlines I feel that officers manage their caseload (i.e.: taking reports, making home

- visits, making family, work, or family contacts) almost exclusively to their convenience and not with the thought of providing public safety as their goal.
- (2) They are overworked with too many cases, pressure from management to complete more paperwork and special assignments, but aren't receiving support via trainings, pay, or upper management. There is simply not enough time in the day and when overtime is not asked for in advance (difficult to do via email when parole officers are in the field) parole officers are reprimanded, taken to administrative hearings and threatened with employment termination. Office meetings still take place once monthly where my office manager was fond of saying, 'If you don't like it, leave. There are several people waiting to take your spot.' If ever the phrase, 'The beatings will continue until morale improves,' was appropriate it is with the Parole Division of TDCJ. I have told this information to every Attorney General attorney/investigator who visited investigating violations of law. When I asked that they include these concerns in their reports they explained that their reports were narrow in scope and asked why I didn't leave the agency since that is really the only recourse. I hope the Sunset Commission is able to meaningfully address my concerns and the concerns of several parole officers.
 - (3) Those working in prisons, parole boards, probation officers have tough jobs and need some help in the form of more staff, more education and more pay.
 - (4) The Texas prison system has its problems, however I believe it's the best in the world. With regard to TDCJ staff I feel that performance-incentive pay raises could help toward attrition in the workforce. For example, a specialized caseload Parole officer currently makes the same amount as an officer working with regular caseloads. That being the case, it has been difficult to obtain and train Parole officers for specialized intensive caseloads when regular caseloads have less accountability.
 - (5) I think parole officers, as well as the prison facility, should be compensated for a parolee's successful turn around after they are released from prison.
 - (6) I think it is a shame that Probation/Parole officers have to spend thousands of dollars on their education and don't get paid enough to make a good living. They spend 10 years or more paying for their education to get paid less than what some of the people with no education on probation get paid for manual labor. Many have to have second jobs to make ends meet. An Officer's job is stressful enough taking on all the problems of people who have no life skills, have drug or alcohol addiction problems, financial problems, relationship problems. It also puts an Officer at risk to have to work 2nd jobs where probationers work. I believe that Officers of Specialized Caseloads who have to put more time and energy into their work and do more home visits than what Officers on regular caseloads do, should have a higher pay rate. Nobody wants to work harder for the same amount of pay as those who have less stress because they deal with more compliant probationers than the Specialized Caseload Officer. I believe we need to put more money into the Substance Abuse Treatment programs--both out-patient and In-patient. Life Skills, GED, and Employment help are vital to helping probationers/parolees succeed on probation or parole.
 - (7) TDCJ allocates money ineffectively. The Parole Division line officers (in the field) and their immediate supervisors are poorly compensated for the dangerous work that they do, including visiting drug houses, half-way houses, poverty stricken and gang-ridden neighborhoods sometimes after dark and on weekends. As a result of very low pay for the hazards of the job, the Parole Division has difficulty retaining workers that they train. (This is highly expensive for the State, as is the 6 week initial training in Beeville.

When I went through the academy it was 2 weeks.) I attended graduate school while working (and paid for my husband's PhD). My 6 years of employment with the parole division was an exception rather than the rule. Low pay for the hazards of the job means TDCJ Parole Division attracts and keeps, in general, substandard employees and promotes substandard managers. (I am willing to speak more in depth about this.) The State gets what it pays for. Raises for parole officers/managers who are able to keep parolees from returning to prison will lead these substandard employees and managers to look the other way when parolees test positive for cocaine, move to another city without parole officer knowledge, maintain their slightly more profitable jobs of selling drugs rather than obtaining legal employment, etc. The Parole Division line officers and immediate supervisors (parole officers who visit parolees' homes and the unit supervisors who know the files) have extensive paperwork/electronic paperwork responsibilities and 'other duties as assigned.' This leaves very little time to actually supervise and get to know clients (which is actually what aides in reducing recidivism). Money, resources, and funds are spent to update technology and to revise Parole Division policy on a constant basis. Funds to 'reinvent the wheel' and to play catch-up with technology have left parole officers and their immediate supervisors without adequate financial compensation for the dangerous work they do every day. During my 6 years as a parole officer for TDCJ-Parole Division I worked under 3 different Office Managers (Turnover is high for upper-management also). There is a lack of continuity when management changes this often. Additionally during my 6 years, the contact standards (the times I saw clients and the ways I saw them) changed 3 times. It is extremely difficult for employees to adapt to constant changes that are substantially different than the work they used to do but provide little added benefit for the offenders. It is even more difficult for parolees to adapt to constant changes in the conditions of their parole and to establish new relationships with their new parole officers. (Ask a parolee how many parole officers he's had. He will start counting multiple hands and he'll tell you an earful about how difficult the transition was for him. This doesn't aid reducing recidivism.) I still work in the building, with a sex offender treatment provider (therapist) and my former colleagues say nothing has changed.

(8) Better pay for parole/probation officers to attract smarter more industrious applicants

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- Having extensive experience on how the Parole system works, it scares me to think that the officers would be made responsible for the success of the parolees, as opposed to making the parolees responsible. Parole officers are given limited resources, have HUGE case loads and are micro-managed. I left b/c not only did TDCJ expectations exceed resources, but as a college graduate, I hated making the salary of a CO V (a job that can be performed by a high school graduate).
 - Basing job performance reviews of parole officers on the life changes of other people is unfair: a lot of effort may (will) still amount to not very much for some people.
 - Responsibility in recidivism from Parole and Probation officers does not even apply. Recidivism may occur despite a competent parole or probation officer. Relapse may be an outcome not related to their professional performance.

PAROLE OFFICER ACCOUNTABILITY AND ATTITUDE

- (1) Parole and Probation must be improved to reduce recidivism. Regardless of what a person has done, parole and probation must be taught some people skills in order to recognize that the parolees or probationers are human beings and not as individuals that will continue to endanger society and find ways to send them back to prison. I have witness this personally and how the parole supervisors and officers talk to the individuals. It is very demeaning.
- (2) The system has its strong points but the probation/parole system is flawed when there is no accountability on the part of probation and parole officers. At the least, success rate incentives may encourage more of them to care about what actually happens to the people they are assigned and demand more accountability. There is enough material here to compose my thesis paper and I could go on for days. Something needs and should be done or the problems will continue to recycle themselves. I assume this is what this survey aims to grasp at.
- (3) The BPP considers itself to be elite and untouchable and gives one a sense of powerless. It should be totally dismantled and rebuilt from the ground up.
- (4) Probation/parole officers should be held accountable for their actions. They should not be shielded from liability due to improper judgments and reports to the court. They should be honest and truthful to their clients.

7. What factors should be considered in making parole decisions?

PAROLE DECISION FACTORS

- (1) Parole officer needs to look at the parole packets and successful accomplishments of the offender and not just the crime...
- (2) The parole system needs massive changes; their major reason for denying parole is 'Nature of the crime.' You CANNOT change that but you can change your behavior. If you're not getting in trouble, working while incarcerated, keeping a low profile, have family support and are up for parole LET THEM OUT, don't keep denying them for Nature of the crime. Anything after 10 years is a waste of time and money if the inmate hasn't learned by then they are not going to learn The Pardon and Parole rules and procedures are too arbitrary particularly on commutation of sentence where no new evidence can be found. There needs to be some flexibility in their rules particularly for ex offenders who have turned their lives around. Call it mercy or what ever.
- (3) The use of Nature of the crime should not be a valid reason for denying parole you can not change the nature of your crime but you can change your nature. If an inmate stays out of trouble, works, and has family support let them go home!!!!
- (4) I feel that cases or files are not even being evaluated when the inmate is up for parole. As far as I'm concerned inmates are just 'Numbers' and their files are shuffled back and

- forth without even evaluating what is in them. We have had all kinds of letters written from employers, friends, family to make the board aware of the support my son would have available to him and also he has finished many college courses as well as others that would provide him with possible employment. He also has never been in trouble or has any cases against him throughout his incarceration. This is the type of information that they should review and consider when they look at an inmates file. It's obvious they are not even reading any of this. They are also not even interviewing the inmate but only sending him a notice as to whether he will get parole or not.
- (5) Simply because a 'file' and the words in the file will never change the crime, however the person 'doing the time', may have improved themselves greatly. Each person had their day in the court talking to the judge, and the jury, when facing their crime and conviction, however, when it comes time to attempt to prove yourself worthy of parole, you don't get to see a single person that is 'directly related' to the vote!! How absurd!!! Why are these folks better known as 'IPO"s even being paid. They do not vote--they only convey information ON PAPER--to the voting members! It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that information that is vital to a person's character is all conveyed through their body language, and the eyes, which are the windows of the soul. If you want to pay the IPO, then bring them on staff as VOTERS and quit wasting tax dollars while important life information is lost in the parole process. One must SEE the party to whom they are speaking in order to 'truly hear' what is being said! It is mandatory that the state begin to spend more money to increase the members on the parole board who are voters. Possibly also implement a satellite system so that we can fully utilize the board to their potential and get their faces out of the paperwork and ON TO THE PERSON THEY ARE VOTING ON! Result from this action: A proper interview allows a positive flow of incoming and outgoing prisoners, who were properly assessed and in the end would contribute to less crime, and less returning to prison. I believe even the inmates would take it seriously if they knew they'd be sitting face to face with the board and giving an account for time spent and why they should be released or not.
- (6) The parole system should be allowed to make decisions based on the inmates' activity, behavior, and cooperation in the prison setting. They should NOT be allowed to use or even accept recommendations for parole from prosecutors who do not see the inmate after incarceration. An inmate may be a perfect candidate for parole and reentry into society through programs and personal adjustment. But, if a prosecutor, years before, states that no parole is recommended, then the inmate becomes frustrated (because the recommendation is a 'secret') and can't understand why following the rules and being a good citizen doesn't bring him what prison officials have promised.
- (7) I THINK WHEN IT COMES TO PAROLE, THEY NEED TO REALLY CHANGE THEIR WAY ON HOW THEY DETERMINE INMATES PAROLE; PEOPLE WHO HAVE SERVED 79% OF THEIR TIME AND HAVE HAD NO DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND FOLLOW ALL GUIDELINES SHOULD BE ABLE TO PAROLE OUT....PAROLE NEEDS TO BE LOOKED INTO A GREAT DEAL, ALONG WITH HOW LONG IT TAKES TO GET AN ANSWER, THAT TIMEFRAME TAKES FOREVER!!!!!!
- (8) The punitive system is made more inhumane by budgetary constraints, i.e. not enough funds for health care, taking away libraries when short-funded. In addition, there is no incentive for good behavior when the parole system merely retries the inmate's case rather than looking at the inmate's behavior while incarcerated and risk factors for

recidivism. Too many Texans are imprisoned, and not enough are released on parole. I am ashamed to be a Texan when I consider the criminal justice system.

- (9) You all need to reevaluate this system of how much time a person is going to get for the crime that they are committing. What is this that a person that is caught with drugs is given more time in jail than a person who has killed or raped someone. Those are the people that you all are letting out on parole early and are giving them less time in jail.
- (10) Some of the Parole officers still set certain ex-offenders up to fail. Some of this is based on their case offenses. Some will admit it openly. I believe that everybody should have a fair chance to properly establish themselves. The officers that I have talked to that admit setting their offenders up to fail have valid reasons, but not all crimes are the same. They do not take into account the individual's efforts to do what it right. They tell them that if they mess up just once, they will send them back. That does not make it easy for an offender to ask for help when he feels the urge to commit another crime.
- (11) We need to go back to the Mandatory Parole System. When Flat Time + Good Conduct Time + Work Time = the Maximum sentence, the Offenders need to be given Parole. This would decrease our enormous Prison population and the 2.5 Billion budget.
- (12) I believe that the focus should be on prevention of entry (successful probation) and prevention of recidivism (successful parole). I believe that good time/work time SHOULD definitely count directly towards release (No Games Like We Have Now). It will lead to better inmate management by your staff. It will not only serve as a rehabilitative technique, but it will enable inmates to parole (some who have served very long sentences), reduce overcrowding, reduce officer shortages, and provide jobs for parole officers. If TDCJ was any other business, it would be out of business. It consumes enormous money, and yet by its own low parole rates, shows that it has not rehabilitated. Prisons should be accountable for their 'successes'...successful parolees...not by how full they can keep the units or how many wardens have used it for a stepping stone. But then TDCJ isn't any other business. Its big business...and you will find that perception is more common than you think.
- (13) Believe that a person whose life has changed dramatically because of incarceration and they are ready to re enter society, should be paroled and given a chance to prove themselves. I believe that the parole system has to play a major part in helping the ex-offender to succeed in the free world and not make it a point to keep them from going to interviews or restricting them from working jobs that they have been hired for. Life skills, made a part of their parole stipulations.
- (14) Too many 'by the book' decisions on parole made by low level staff.
- (15) Parolees should not be re-incarcerated ever for a technical parole violation. Parolees should be permitted early release from parole for compliance.

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- Sexual predators should never get parole, and maximum sentences.
 - Prisoners serving time for capital murder should never be eligible for parole when they get life in prison instead of the death penalty.
 - Convicted sex-offenders (in particular, child molesters) should be required to be on parole for life after their prison time is complete.

8. How consistent are the decisions made by different parole panels? What changes, if any, could be made to improve consistency?

CONSISTENCY OF PAROLE DECISIONS

- (1) The system is broken, from the top on down. The Board of Pardons and Paroles has way too much discretionary power and they are not releasing enough non-violent and/or rehabilitated offenders, therefore keeping the incarceration numbers high.
- (2) The parole system is a joke. There is no set perimeter or outlines on what someone has to do to be released on parole. They can do everything right and pay there dept to society and work on getting their lives back in order to be release to only be turned down year after year. Then the next person that doesn't play by the rules is released.
- (3) I think it is appalling the way the Board of Pardons and Paroles operate. I believe they should be monitored and accountable for their actions and decisions. There is too much discretion!
- (4) There needs to be more accountability to legislators or outside/ independent 'Watchdogs' (like yourselves - Thank You), and more outside, independent and legislative overseeing of TDCJ Administration. This also applies to Parole Officers who directly are involved with the Parolee!!! While their interest should also be the public's safety, their direct priority and mandate should be the successful re-entry of his/her client back into society, rather than hassling their client with almost impossible demands till they can frustrate and then 'violate' that client's status. Again, there are good and bad PO's, ... who is holding them accountable??? A parolee who wants to make it is subject to the 'luck of the draw'... That's NOT right!
- (5) Every possible effort should be made to set clear, achievable standards that must be met so that those prisoners that are WILLING to meet them by determination and hard work can EARN their PAROLE, and have a REALISTIC HOPE of doing so. (closely monitored rehab programs)

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- Has become so lenient that offenders are not held being held accountable. All TDCJ seems to be interested in is releasing offenders from prison, probation and parole.
 - Harsher, swifter punishments for parole violators.

9. Do offenders receive sufficient due process in parole decisions and revocation hearings? If not, what improvements should be made?

DUE PROCESS CONSIDERATIONS

- (1) Texas parole officials, including Rissie Owens and Brian Collier, continue to insist that Texas parolees are entitled to no due process protections whatsoever when special conditions of parole are imposed after a parolee has been released on parole without any special conditions on their Certificates of Parole. Owens and Collier have already been found to have violated the federal due process rights of Texas parolees for this reason by at least four federal trial and appellate courts, but they have escaped injunctive relief which would otherwise prohibit their actions by pleading that they 'won't do it again.' Invariably, they have returned to their old ways and enforced against other parolees the policies the Courts have ruled unconstitutional. I would suggest that Texas law include a provision whereby Texas parole officials, such as Owens and Collier, be held personally liable for damages and attorney's fees which result from their deliberate violation of any declaratory judgment issued by a State or Federal court with competent jurisdiction. A provision similar to what I propose, involving the liability of judges for attorney's fees is contained in Title 42 U.S.C. Section 1988. Without such a provision, Owens and Collier, by their immunity, will undoubtedly continue to avoid responsibility for their actions, ignore the constitutional due process rights Texas parolees, and ignore applicable rulings of State and Federal courts. Worst of all, without such a provision allowing Owens and Collier to be held personally liable, the State of Texas will have to continue to pay the attorney's fees of the parolee's counsel caused by their knowing and deliberate unconstitutional actions. The taxpayers of Texas should not have to pay these costs, Owens and Collier should.
- (2) Parolees are being sent back for minor infractions with no new charges and it is a waste of money. Spend more money on the parole system and make PO's answer when they make mistakes that cost parolees their freedom because as of right now NO ONE IN TDC will listen to a complaint on a parole officer.
- (3) The Texas Criminal 'Justice' system is punitive and unjust. The focus is on severe punishment. The system houses thousands of inmates who are not a threat to anyone and would be productive citizens if it were not for the arbitrary, unjust parole system. This archaic system benefits no one, nor is it an effective deterrent to crime.
- (4) The most preposterous thing is that the parole system/deferred adjudication system sets people up for failure. It shouldn't be that easy to fail. My brother failed to report to his probation officer for 2-3 months, and now they revoked his probation. That is absurd because he had successfully fulfilled his obligations already for a year. In fact, he had reverted to drugs during that time. But two months later, he had gotten back to his feet, while the parole officer never allowed him to turn back the clock. That is just acceptable. The parole system should never be giving up so easily
- (5) I will hopefully be up for parole 9-06. That's if anyone looks at my file for consideration. Like many of the older inmates I have met, I am in TDCJ for an administrative violation of my parole and not re-violating. I completed 8 years of a 10 year deferred and lost my job and was sent here for 5 years. What have I learned?

Harris county Judge Brian Rains lives to put people in TDCJ up to the last day they have on probation. Why? Because he can. Many I have talked to had him. Nothing I, my family or my attorney offered did any good, I already had another job and a place to live but he would not consider it, even with documentation. I didn't even have a hearing - if I insisted on the hearing I would have gotten 10-20 for not having a job. There is not credit for what I have done good or no matter how hard I have tried to change. No more than there is in here. The system 'believes' no one can really change and they just need to stay in jail and work for no wages and no credit for TDCJ.

- There should not be an outpour of bringing the prisoners out of jail early on parole, and it should be taught to them in jail that they are facing the consequences for their actions and that they should be 're-educated' on the rules of society and how they ended up in prison in the first place isn't going to change once they get out.
- I think the parole board intentionally releases people who will be most likely to re-offend/recidivate (?) to justify the money spent on prisons. Is this something the Sunset commission could review & fix?

10. How adequate is the current process for awarding and overseeing the contracts with the University of Texas Medical Branch and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center for offender health care? What improvements, if any, could be made to this contractual relationship?

CONTRACTS WITH UTMB AND TTUHSC

- (1) The medical delivery service system wastes far too much money on an inflated salary, bloated, top-heavy, Galveston-based, ivory tower power elite hierarchal structure who have a very limited understanding of the actual daily issues on the unit level of health delivery issues and realities ---BECAUSE THEY SPEND SO LITTLE TIME ON THE ACTUAL UNITS. ALL PRISON HEALTH MANAGERS AND DIRECTORS SHOULD BE BASED IN THE PRISONS. The managers at UTMB are currently so far removed from the situations they control and manage they have very little understanding or appreciation for the impact of their decisions. They are indifferent to the staff issues on the unit level and are more interested cutting \$ and services where the rubber meets the road in the actual health delivery. They rarely set foot on a prison unit. There is a major disconnect between their policies on paper and what is actually happening in terms of health care services at the unit level--- it is a cynical asymmetry between the two. Look at the stability and longevity of the managers (deadwood) at the top of the organization who are entrenched in their jobs and the high turnover rates of the individual professionals at the unit level delivering front-line health care services with limited support and an indifferent administration who are divorced from the day to day realities of health delivery at the unit level. Many clinicians --- good and caring ones leave in utter disgust, just look at the turnover rate, because of the lack of support and unrealistic demands created by a UTMB administration with a singular focus on the bottom line and managers looking to justify their existence. TDCJ needs to question the money spent on the bloated ranks of UTMB managers vs. unit level health providers. Is TDCJ they getting their moneys' worth in terms of service to their institutions?

11. Are the agency and the university health-care providers doing a sufficient job ensuring offenders receive quality health care services? If not, how could they do better?

ENSURING HEALTH CARE SERVICES

- (1) The insidious torture that takes place with the health care system in prison is 'criminal'

- on TDCJ's part. If you are going to house human beings, then care for them. If you don't want to take care of health needs - acute or chronic - then either give the health care responsibilities to an outside party or release the inmate to their communities & families for private care. Poor care is not responsible care. Health education is extremely important as well and EACH inmate in a Texas prison should get comprehensive health education and should have access to monitored self care items.
- (2) The health care is joke. I've seen people wait 4 days to get treated for a spider bite that ate holes in their flesh large enough to putt a golf ball in while awaiting treatment. I could go on forever.
 - (3) Better medical services are needed with accountability.
 - (4) Medical and mental health care is practically non-existent.
 - (5) The medical care in the Texas prison is downright scary. I have seen many a person die to medical neglect, mistreatment, or simply being forced to work, carry things during a shakedown in serious violation of their medical restrictions in place. Scott R. Portnoy
 - (6) Medical care is non-existent and if given at all is totally unacceptable and I am in the medical field. The old units need to shut down and we do not need new prisons. I was told by my State Representative the old units were going to be closed and there would be no new ones built. Has this taken place yet? No, it has not. Now is the time for you to do something right and get it right. I am so tired of reading what a horrible State Texas has become, but you know, it is true right down to the last comment and I for one a native Texan am ashamed to admit I was born here and grew up here and if more people realized what was going on to fellow Texans there would be more complaints than you already get. I know I have written before and my husband filled out this form also, but the more I hear and the more I think, the more I want to share with you. Thank you for allowing me to voice my concerns to you.
 - (7) The mentally ill should have the best of conditions fitting their illness
 - (8) A much better system of health care for prisoners, quicker and more efficient service
 - (9) A large percentage of prisoners are there because of mental illness. I think it is of utmost importance to identify and provide treatment for these people at the time of arrest, before incarceration, so that they can get the proper treatment. Prison diversion programs need expansion to prevent some of these people from being sent to prison instead of to treatment. More money needs to be spent in providing mental health care during and AFTER incarceration as well as BEFORE crimes are committed. The warehousing of the mentally ill in prisons is a disgrace in this country. More state funded mental health hospitals need to be built instead of more prisons.
 - (10) They should have more and better access to health care
 - (11) I am a fiscally conservative person, so I don't believe pouring money into every problem is the solution to it. One area that can never have enough money spent on it is complete medical care. EVERY human being should be entitled to it!
 - (12) More/better health and dental care
 - (13) Health concerns are not being met. The whole system is broken and needs to be revamped.
 - (14) Health and DENTAL care is simply horrible. Not even third-world standards.
 - (15) Prisoners should have not only better access to healthcare but BETTER healthcare than what they already do.
 - (16) I believe that mandatory HIV testing at entry and release is essential for prisoners. I also believe that greater access to prevention and treatment programs in prisons is

- crucial, and that condoms should be made freely available to prisoners.
- (17) I think that the Sunset Commission should adopt the following recommendations for the Texas Dept of Criminal Justice 1. Provide access to condoms through health care providers and in discreet locations. 2. Allow community based organizations to provide condoms in conjunction with HIV prevention programming. 3. Develop a plan for the safe and anonymous disposal of condoms. 4. Guarantee that no inmate will receive disciplinary action for possession of condoms. 5. Ensure that all inmates upon their release receive prevention materials including, but not limited to, condoms, resource lists and HIV prevention and transmission information.
 - (18) I feel that the Medical care is insufficient and outdated and the Medical personnel should be better educated and experienced. Better care is needed in this area.
 - (19) I feel strongly that the health care system within prisons needs to be addressed and strongly. Given that HIV-related causes are the number one cause of death within prison, HIV prevention & treatment needs to be a recommendation to the Sunset Commission.
 - (20) I believe that all prisoners should have access to mental health workers and rehabilitation services. There is currently no recognition of mental health issues which in large part is why individuals end up in jail or prison in the first place. I think every effort should be made to rehabilitate through mental health services, job skills training, etc.
 - (21) It's important to continue good mental health care in jails because so many prisoners have mental illnesses (and drug addiction is lumped in with that also).
 - (22) Completely rework the medical/health system so that medical care is readily available to offenders.
 - (23) Given that 95% of these folks return to normal life, it is vital to give them health care and education to keep society safe from disease and more crime.
 - (24) I believe it is vital that prisoners get better health care; otherwise they endanger the general public when they come out: Tuberculosis, pneumonia, hepatitis etc; and they cost more (public) money due to unattended health problems (prevention vs. cure...)
 - (25) I think TDCJ could help lower the rate of Hep C if they treated all prisoners that have it. They could make it a requirement of parole that the prisoners be treated before they were released. There is large number of prisoners with this disease that will spread it when they are released without treatment.
 - (26) I think that medical attention should be given to prisoners when they need it. They should be treated just like a normal person. They deserve the same medical attention that anyone would get.
 - (27) I think there should be more condoms in the prisons or an aids testing facility
 - (28) Improve medical benefits.
 - (29) There are major problems with the health care, the work programs, the food, and with the mail not being delivered in a timely manner, retaliation against the inmates from the guards and so forth.
 - (30) Implement the use of juvenile psychotherapy because the resulting benefits override the costs.
 - (31)
 - (32) MENTAL HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION AND TREATMENT ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ONLY INCARCERATION.
 - (33) Mental healthcare is extremely lacking and insufficient in prisons and deserves a larger

- investment to help those who have fallen through the cracks.
- (34) It is very important to provide mental healthcare to the prisoners.
 - (35) In general I have no direct problems with TDCJ, expect most of the problems come from lack of quality medical care.
 - (36) I think the government should have same way of monitoring UTMB and Texas Tech health care provisions and use of prisoners in clinical trials.

12. How efficient is TDCJ's process for addressing grievances from offenders and complaints from the public regarding health care issues? What changes, if any, should be made to how the agency handles these types of grievances and complaints?

ADDRESSING HEALTH CARE GRIEVANCES

- (1) I would highly recommend human relations classes for guards and medical personnel.
- (2) The health care system they currently have needs to be updated. My son was told by the doctor in his unit that he did not have much experience with hardware, my son has a plate in his foot and will just have to deal with his pain and problems he is having because the doctor does not have experience??? I just do not understand that kind of comment.

13. What changes, if any, should be made to improve offenders' access to the prescription and over-the-counter medications they need?

ACCESS TO PRESCRIPTION AND OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION

- (1) Major mental health issues such as bi-polar disorder must be addressed through drug therapy and other forms of treatment before individuals have the capacity to benefit from educational programs and other types of rehabilitation. Travis County, where I reside, denies prisoners certain classes of needed psychotropic drugs. Without these medications prisoners suffer unnecessarily and lack the capacity to try and change their lives.
- (2) There needs to be increased sensitivity to the medical needs of inmates; especially those with medical conditions requiring timely medications; i.e., diabetics requiring insulin. I am aware of a case wherein local detention centers/jails have refused medically prescribed medications to the point an inmate went into a diabetic coma and had to be evacuated to a hospital. Basic medical needs are humane for anyone.

14. What changes, if any, should be made regarding to public's access to information about offenders health care?

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- (1) More clarity on parole for families and offenders.

**ADDITIONAL RESPONDENT COMMENTS REGARDING
TEXAS' CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTATIVE MEASURES PRIOR TO INCARCERATION

- (1) What I can say is that I believe in prevention. Help children whose parents have been in prison with counseling and resources, expose kids to sports and support systems, make sure that kids in low-income communities have access to a great education in which teachers can pay attention to their individual needs and there are HEALTHY meals available to them.
- (2) We need to focus more finances on programs for the children of offenders in effort to do everything possible to break the cycle of pain that leads to criminal lifestyle.
- (3) In our school, many of our students express that they have family members or a parent that is incarcerated. However, there are not many counseling sessions for these children or education about character skills, and wise choices to help kids learn how to keep themselves out of trouble. Many of our kids are surrounded by pressures to be in gangs and are at risk for ending up incarcerated themselves, but there is a lack of preventative education for them.
- (4) Programs should be set up so that children of offenders will not be negatively affected.
- (5) I think that children of incarcerated parents should be made to have a mentor and go to after school or summer programs.
- (6) Children whose parent(s) have spent time locked up need verbal encouragement not to follow the same path as parent(s). They realistically need to be show a different way to make decisions.
- (7) Children are brought up to the prison system to see a parent and get to see their parent behind bars....they do not understand that prison is a bad place, all they see is the good part. So why should it bother them to get sent to prison, it is not so bad, they have TV, can go to school, have 3 meals a day, have their clothes cleaned and provided for them, can go to the doctor and get medication when needed, continue their education, plus many more perks all at no cost to the inmate. Hmmm, everything is free to the inmate....plus you don't have to work to get it....what is to make a kid NOT want to go to prison?
- (8) Counseling and tutoring programs could be a good investment to help children of inmates avoid the same path.
- (9) Educational programs to help families of incarcerated relative and particularly children.
- (10) It would be wonderful if Texas would work harder to keep people from prison and help the children of prisoners to avoid the experience. However, with holding kids back who fail the TAKS test starting next year the state needs to 1) hand out calendars so kids can mark their drop out date after they fail the test, and 2) start building the prisons to hold all these new dropouts. Sincerely, more needs to be done to help children who come from families with parents in prison. The parents need to learn about being better parents and the children need to be well cared for while the parent is incarcerated.
- (11) When I tutored reading at TDCJ (1970's), almost all of the inmates with whom I spoke were functionally illiterate. End that problem, and you put a serious dent in crime.
- (12) As an economics and sociology student at Rice University in Houston, I understand how important education is to the process of keeping individuals out of jail.

- (13) It is definitely cheaper to pay on the front end vs. the back end. I think that Texas needs to spend more money on prevention and drop out rates and less on building prisons. We are sending far too many people to prison, who could otherwise be on street working and contributing to society. Somewhere in our history, we lost our way. We must do something to turn the Texas Criminal Justice System around. It is a train that is out of control and bound to collide with devastating consequences.
- (14) The ones that truly belong in prison because they truly committed a crime(s), must do the time, however, we as a society are at fault. We dropped the ball when it comes to disciplining our children. Without exercising the parental duty of control and reasonable discipline, many of these prisoners are 'out of control' and they are only victims of the lack of parental duties. We have terrified our parents with the whole 'child abuse' lie that if you discipline your child, it is child abuse, therefore, parents are afraid to take control and use reasonable discipline so that their children will not become victims of the criminal justice system. These people have become the 'slaves' of the criminal justice system.
- (15) While the immediate aim of the current system seems to be oriented toward punishment, more effort needs to be exerted in the social aspects to increase the quality of life in our society. The long-term actions taken need to be aimed at identifying the causes that led to such deviant behavior and working to resolve these issues.
- (16) While it does not always fall under the direct purview of the TCJ, far too little effort and funding is spent attempting to educate citizens in such a way as to keep them out of prison in the first place.
- (17) While in college at the University of Texas at Austin, I've taken a very deep interest in criminology and psychopathology. I took approximately 9 or more hours of college coursework that addressed criminal justice and criminology. Throughout these courses it has repeatedly been shown that in order to somehow lower crime rates, education levels and the amount of treatment (such as counseling or drug rehab), when raised, can greatly reduce recidivism. Also, another point heavily emphasized was the need for prevention of crime, to keep those at high risk for criminal activity out of the penal system where it becomes much harder for most criminals to get out of the cycle.
- (18) We spend way too much money on punishing people and making them worse human beings in prisons, and then expect them to rejoin society and somehow fit in. We need to address the problems of why crime occurs up front. Economic factors, lack of job opportunities and keeping kids in school.
- (19) We spend too much money on prisons, and not enough on education.
- (20) We should stop incarcerating non-violent offenders and slow incarceration rates down. We are wasting prison space and money that could be used for education and rehabilitation
- (21) We need to invest on the front end of people's lives--education, job opportunities, so we don't have to spend such a ridiculous amount just to lock people up and make them worse.
- (22) We need much more concentration on youth education, recreation, financial and health security, and self-esteem. This would be our best investment in reducing incarceration
- (23) We need more schools not prisons!!
- (24) We need more prevention programs, for our kids, we need to spend the monies on education, sports etc.
- (25) We need more money spent on education so we will have to spend less on prisons. Classrooms need to have a 17-1 student teacher ratio in grades Pre-K through 8. Teacher need to earn at least the national average.
- (26) We need more crime preventive programs instead of spending money on rehab.

- (27) We need more attention placed on children and adolescents--more counselors, more educational opportunities. If 'at-risk' children are given more attention, there will be more hope for their future.
- (28) The system we have now is broken and we are spending way too much money locking people up and not enough educating our children.
- (29) We need a remake of the whole Texas Criminal Justice System. We need to spend more money on education and prevention, than on warehousing.
- (30) We are the smartest and strongest nation in the world. We ought to be spending our tax dollars to find ways to raise our children and to counsel our adults so that we do not need to spend money on jails.
- (31) I would like to see a greater emphasis on education for prisoners and the general public; hopefully that would eventually lessen the number of prisoners in the system.
- (32) Think about the 'Frame oil filter man', 'You can pay me now or pay me later'. When we better concentrate on seeing to the emotional, educational and physical needs of our children early, then we will be providing less fodder for the much more expensive (in \$'s and lives) prison system. The healthier a society is the fewer people they must lock away.
- (33) More education= fewer prisons= lower taxes! Everyone wins.
- (34) There should be more emphasis on keeping people out of prison to begin with. Our incarceration rates are far too high for this state, and this will only change with increased education programs and other social welfare systems.
- (35) We need more rehabilitation centers and more education for our youth before they enter prisons!
- (36) The rate of incarceration for non-violent drug offenders is disgusting. Billions are being wasted to 'punish' those who have harmed no one. This state desperately needs more funding for social services, particularly education (we are ranked among the worst states in the nation for this); stop spending my tax dollars locking up harmless hippies and use it to educate the next generation.
- (37) The problem is that our youth need to be better educated. Also, the exposure to rap music and violent television needs to be curbed. There isn't much you can do once these criminals are adults. This needs to be addressed before they get to adulthood.
- (38) The numbers prove the unemployed and uneducated are more likely to be convicted of a crime in there lifetime, and, moreover, people released from prison often times end up going back--more money for education (across the board).
- (39) The key to lowering the rate of incarceration is education, especially in minority-rich areas. There is a disproportionate number of minorities, especially African-Americans, in the prison system, and this, I believe, is directly correlated with low opportunity to further one's education.
- (40) People often learn how to become criminals in prison and so the focus should be on preventative measures, particularly during childhood.
- (41) Texas should stop building prisons; State money is better spent on the TX public school system. Educating young people may prevent desperate measures that involve them with criminal behavior.
- (42) Texas needs to rank much higher nationally in overall spending on education, health, and social welfare spending than currently. We place way too little emphasis as a society on positive, proactive endeavors most likely to prevent people from falling into lives of crime. It is a matter of considerable shame to me that my state and my country incarcerate so many people.

- (43) Increased state spending on social services (healthcare, education, anti-poverty programs) would greatly reduce spending on the criminal justice system and reduce Texas' prison population considerably. For too long now Texas has been more willing to spend money to exact retribution for crime than to address and alleviate the causes of crime. I encourage Texas to reexamine its priorities.
- (44) It is in the best interest of all Texans to spend less on prison walls and more on prison programs and prevention.
- (45) Though the jails are over crowded, emphasis need to be on why people are going into jail, and take care of them also, and not disregard them.
- (46) I think educating people would help to deter them from jail.
- (47) Start with high school and middle school. More money needs to be spent on after school programs to keep kids off the streets. Offer cool classes that will keep troubled kids interested (i.e. art mural projects, hip-hop break dancing classes, belly dancing classes, formula SAE race car competitions).
- (48) The current TX criminal justice system embodies waste of public resources in terms of valuable human lives as well as public funding. Texas ought to reallocate its prison funding to education and treatment for people both in and out of the prison system.
- (49) Spend more money on education and services for low income families and you will have less criminals.
- (50) Do more to improve the state of public education to keep people out.
- (51) The war on drugs will never be won, and no one wants their tax dollars being spent on incarcerating harmless marijuana users. More people are harmed by alcohol and tobacco alone than every other drug combined, yet they are legal. Just doesn't make sense. Let's use some of the money we throw away for these purposes and attempt to fix our wholly deplorable education system.
- (52) Shut down 90 percent of prisons, spend the money on poverty relief and education.
- (53) Seems that we are trying to find solutions of people already in prison. Quite possibly concerns may need to be addressed previous to people being in custody.
- (54) Preventive instead of reactive. Lower the crime rate by increasing education level and work opportunities.
- (55) PREVENTION!!!
- (56) Prevention of crime is better for society than punishment. Why not stop the problem of funding prisons by stopping crime before it starts. If you educate young people, foster family units, and help drug addicts then you will only have to spend money on habitual violent/sex offenders.
- (57) Prevention is key!!!
- (58) PREVENTION WORKS - NEED MORE EMPHASIS ON TREATMENT OPTIONS.
- (59) It's too big! What a waste of money, especially when its impact on deterrence is questionable. More education, more treatment (inside prisons/jails and out).
- (60) Not only educational opportunities should be envisioned, but job opportunities, access to social services, healthcare, etc. Individuals must feel that opportunities are real and be provided with the tools to achieve personal goals in life. Help with child care and other expenses for single parents, etc.
- (61) Increasing funding to programs that help prevent people from becoming criminals in the first place. From the studies I've seen, once they're in jail it's usually too late. What can be done so that people don't become criminals?
- (62) Getting children to snitch on their parents; getting parents to drug test and rat on their

children; harassing the sick and dying is despicable and against American ideals. It destroys families without compunction or compassion. If there is a real problem with a child using or having been recruited to sell to his peers the current policy is too harsh because the best way to fight drugs in schools is with compassion, treatment and as little embarrassment and public shame as possible. The children involved will be much more likely to grow up as good citizens if treated in this way.

- (63) My view is that we need more programs to prevent children living in poverty to have poor preparation for school, such as Headstart, so they can get an education. We also need access for families to parenting classes.
- (64) Most research indicates that incarceration is directly proportional to a person's education and economic standing.
- (65) More prevention through education. Help for at-risk children.
- (66) More of our money is being spent on the prison system than the educational system, which is a problem. I think education is the best way to prevent crime. I think we need prioritize a little bit.
- (67) More money and time should be spent on preventing crime rather than just housing criminals.
- (68) More energy should be spent in prevention and education.
- (69) Look at what works in other countries – more efforts focusing on rehabilitation and reversing the process that creates criminals (poverty, lack of parental interest/guidance, lack of education...).
- (70) A program that reduces the rate at which prisoners commit crime once outside of prison and deters citizens from committing crime in the first place would be best.
- (71) I support pre-emptive programs, like after school programs, better child welfare programs, and high school retention programs, that will help young people stay out of trouble and keep them from going to the joint.
- (72) It's a shame that such a great state and nation as a whole still have such a high incidence of violent crime and general apathy shown towards other people. I'd say that most crimes against people and property show a lack of respect for other people's way of life and belongings. I believe the best way to begin a gradual but permanent change in this attitude is to not only improve education for youths and already-incarcerated prisoners, but also to promote positive values through strong families. I don't believe that heavy-handed religious teachings, nor denying access to violent media or entertainment, promotes values very well at all. These tend to cause rifts in societal structures and make a small number of people think they know what's best for the majority they don't truly understand. Encouragement of strong family values--togetherness, faithfulness and fidelity, respect for the elderly, emphasis on education and self-betterment, respect and nurturing of children, honesty, and compassion for your neighbors--is sadly dwindling from my generation and the next one to come. We have to reverse this to see a positive growth in our communities. -Vijay S. | polarber1@hotmail.com.
- (73) I do not believe that the solution to high incarceration rates lies only in reallocating prison funds to treatment centers, probation centers, etc. Focus should also be put on trying to solve this country's social problems.
- (74) The problem of non-violent crime is more of an issue related to education in the larger society and the inherent class and ethnic discrimination of the larger society. Violent crimes are also products of socio-economic apartheid but are less easily solved.
- (75) It seems as though we as a nation are becoming a 'prison factory.' I would think it would be

better to find ways to prevent than contain. I like the idea of working with schools to try to help students before they make choices that cause them to end up in prison. I believe that education is the key.

- (76) It is way past time for change, you only have to glance at nearly any county's public website to see how minorities are incarcerated at a higher rate than whites. It is time to spend money on education and children to stop this abomination. In America, education is often the means for socioeconomic improvement. African American males without a college education constitute a substantial segment of our criminal judicial system and ranks of the unemployed (Austin, 1996). Among youth who have never been to prison, African American youth are nine times more likely to be sentenced to prison than white youth and 48 times more likely than white youth to be sent to prison for drug offences (Marable, 2003). It is estimated that African Americans are imprisoned five times more than their counterparts in apartheid South Africa and one out of every three male African Americans 20-29 are in jail or under court supervision (Murphy,1996). There are more African American men in their 20s under court control than are enrolled in colleges and universities (Bass & Coleman, 1997). Seventy-five percent of all African American male dropouts in their early 20s are in the criminal justice system (Murphy, 1996). Institutions have great power to both reward and penalize. In 1990 Louis Harris conducted a survey and found that 75% of African Americans were victims of racism in schools (Lapichick, 2000). To understand institutional racism and its effect, it is important to view white perceptions of African Americans. According to the National Opinion Research Center Foundation, sponsored by the National Science Foundation, 56% of whites think that African Americans are more violent, 62% believe African Americans do not work as hard as whites, 77% believe the African Americans live off of welfare, and 53% believe African Americans are less intelligent than whites (Lapichick, 2000). These perceptions influence not only policies and procedures in the criminal justice system as cited earlier but also at predominately white institutions when interpreting and enforcing institutional policies and practices. Institutional and Cultural racism are proven to be barriers to academic success (Hawkins, 2001 p 34, Hall and Rowan, 2001). Warehousing these men (and women) only wastes our tax dollars... it is time for revolutionary change in how we view the criminal justice system.
- (77) It is extremely important to invest money in the education system, and in improving the living situation, and future perspective of children growing up in low SES neighborhoods. It is also important to invest money in rehabilitation and crime prevention programs, rather than in repression.
- (78) Issues of criminal justice are highly reflective of our government at large, and tend to be the end result of our total efforts (or non-efforts) in the areas of education, drug use, health and child care. While I support reform of the system with greater attention and spending on drug treatment, intense intervention with youth, and less prison building, I think we can have a greater impact by giving these issues their due efforts outside of the criminal justice system. Education spending should be primarily done through public education, not the prison system.
- (79) It is a shame that we send so many of our young to prison. As a society we are failing these individuals. We should spend more money on education and training programs, so that young adults understand an education will serve as the foundation for them to build a career, one that doesn't involve selling drugs or violent crime.
- (80) Instead of building more prisons, we should provide quality education and health care to

all.

- (81) In the name of changing society for the better, the focus and money is better spent on education and treatment. Basically helping end economic discrepancies (through education and health care) would reduce crime. The focus of the Texas Criminal Justice system is backwards on these points.
- (82) In general I feel that the so called victimless crimes (drug use, prostitution, etc.) must be treated through social programs like rehab and job training(including funding/scholarship for college level training). In general this will not make the system safer or less safe but would produce more productive citizens.
- (83) I feel that our taxpayers are overburdened with incarcerating non-violent drug offenders; money spent to lock up a marijuana smoker is money wasted - our public school systems could use those dollars MUCH more.
- (84) If we invest more time in our kids, especially the 'at risk' children/teens, we wouldn't need to worry so much about prison space or the lack thereof. Most of those in prison come from neighborhoods where it seems like the Govt. has abandoned them, more investment in those areas would give children and adults more opportunities--instead of dealing with drugs, or any crime.
- (85) The drug problem can't really be fixed until we effectively combat the socio-economic disparities in largely urban areas.
- (86) Until the State focuses on the success of our kids in school the drug problems will only increase in order for a person with out an education to make 'ends meet.' It starts early!! (elem-high school).
- (87) Most sentences should be shortened and the death penalty replaced with a life or a long sentence. Use the money saved for prevention (education, job training, mental health and drug treatment programs) and rehabilitation and education in prison.
- (88) I think the focus of any criminal justice system should start with juveniles. If you can rehabilitate them when they're young you can reduce the rate of recidivism. But there has to be a strong focus on rehabilitation and not a juvenile justice system that so closely mirrors that of the adult system.
- (89) Our school systems need to be fixed.
- (90) I think that Texas is spending too much money on prisons when there are so many other issues out there that are in desperate need of funds like education. We need to cut back costs for prisons as much as possible.
- (91) With regards to education, I believe that public education is severely lacking. For the most part, public educators have become apathetic about teaching and the education provided is minimal at best. Also, violence and disrespect in public schools has become very high and is not handled as though it is a serious problem. My experience in college, at a university, has been worlds apart from my public high school experience.
- (92) I think that education is the most important thing. We need to get our kids through high school and into some kind of professional programs so that they can provide for themselves and not turn to illegal activities. It is also important to have good mentors and clean neighborhoods where one can feel safe.
- (93) I think Texas needs to spend more time and money fixing the root causes of the issue such as poverty, broken educational system, lack of jobs than on building more prisons.
- (94) We need to focus on prevention rather than incarceration.
- (95) I strongly believe that education is the key to solve many problems that society has these days.

- (96) I like the idea of providing better high school education, however, I don't think it warrants reducing expenditures on imprisonment since the effects will only be felt in the long-run.
- (97) I have worked, studied and done some research in the criminal justice system and its interrelated aspects, and have invariably felt that there are not enough programs to circumvent an increasing offender population and escalating recidivism rates. The fact that incarceration is more costly than treatment (particularly for substance abusing offenders), leads me to question why the system continues to build more prisons and invest in the prison industry versus establishing more educational, substance abuse treatment and/or employment/training programs that may actually target the core issues that drive people in criminal activity instead of merely locking people up in an environment that does not in any manner induce change.
- (98) I feel that most emphasis should be in education of those children who are high risk to become criminals. Prevention is most important.
- (99) I feel we have many social problems that force incarceration which is simply an ineffectual and politically-charged effect or result of a dysfunctional society. Until we make lasting, permanent changes at the grass-root level with families and education, incarceration will continue to be ineffectual and highly unsuccessful.
- (100) I feel that there need to be education for high risk students before they commit crimes serious enough to become incarcerated. I also feel that parenting classes should be made available for parents unable to control their children regardless of the child's age. 1-18 years of age.
- (101) I feel that before we can help these individuals we first have to grasp the problems we have in society in a realistic and spiritual manner that forces some of these into this situation. After which allow the opportunity for faith based groups if requested to minister to these individuals how to gain the authority over their problems through a relationship with God.
- (102) I do think that education is a MUST. I think for many cases, our education system failed many of our inmates. Had they been properly educated and given hope and encouragement, they might not have turned to the crime that they did. The expectation needs to rise--a lot--in our education system.
- (103) I don't think that spending more money on incarceration is the best way to reduce crime. More resources should be dedicated to finding and eliminating criminal causation. I think the Parole Board could be very good at accomplishing this goal as they have direct contact with criminals, and theoretically some level of influence on their actions after release from prison. I think the Parole Board should help identify factors of crime causation and another agency/department should be responsible for preventing them and providing alternatives to crime.
- (104) More focus on community issues that may lead to prison terms!!
- (105) I believe that the state can save money by investing in education, and health treatment programs and spending less on incarceration.
- (106) I believe that if more time and money were spent on rehabilitation, education, and less on the prison system, there would be no more need for more prisons. There would be a lot less repeat offenders.
- (107) I believe in reform and education. Why not get to the root of the problem instead of pushing prison.
- (108) I believe education is the key not only for prevention but the key not to return to prison. Without education you don't know what you don't know and someone better informed will always make a more educated decision than not.

- (109) I believe education is key. If given a better education, more opportunities would become available for those needing a job, thus less likelihood of them turning to crime in order to make money.
- (110) I think that the Texas Criminal Justice system has a bad reputation for imprisoning and killing criminals rather than preventing future crimes. I do think that more emphasis on rehabilitation and crime deterrence would help the state, rather than just putting more people in prison.
- (111) Building more prisons in Texas is not the answer. There are fundamental societal flaws involved in the making of a criminal and prisons are merely a band aid on a metaphorical flesh wound.
- (112) I believe that crime is a result of the interplay of a number of factors, including economic opportunity, educational attainment, and family background.
- (113) I would provide a child with mentors and good role models. It's my opinion that you could spend all the money in the world on a child, but without good role models you won't have good results.
- (114) Focus on prevention rather than treatment--education is key.
- (115) Everything I read tells me that too much is spent on incarceration, not nearly enough on prevention and/or rehabilitation. I also note that the grand majority of prisoners are minorities and high school dropouts. That tells me that education is a definite factor that is not being addressed.
- (116) The issue of crime cannot be solved with prisons and cops, but only by addressing the social and economic constructs that produce criminals: poverty, education, health care, and racism.
- (117) There needs to be more focus on keeping people out of prison in the first place; more cost efficient treatment programs and probationary measures are good alternatives that would allow more money to go towards schools and other preventative programs in at-risk environments.
- (118) I REALLY wish Texas would spend more in education in the first place, which I think would drastically reduce the number of youths in the system and possibly help them stay out in the future if they should get in trouble and be put in prison.
- (119) Emphasis should be on treatment and prevention.
- (120) Education. Education. Education.
- (121) Education, education, education. If our schools were well-funded houses of education instead of breeding grounds for anti-social tendencies and drug offenders -- a direct consequence of incomprehensible neglect -- our prisons wouldn't be filled with non-violent 'criminals' whose lives were ruined by prison sentences which came about as a consequence of not being provided for as a child. Teach the children and they will learn. It's not a difficult concept.
- (122) Texas courts rely too heavily on incarceration. A former head of the TDCJ Board, about five years ago, said that 25 percent of the prisoners in TDCJ did not need to be there. Many other individuals who have studied prison demographics, prison policy, etc., including myself, believe that the number is closer to 50 percent. There are effective alternatives to incarceration including treatment for addictions, education, and greater use of the probation and parole systems.
- (123) Education, education, education.
- (124) Education, education and education ... and also make an early effort on the youngsters/teens that are especially prone to end up in crime... More scholarships and such

is not the only way as it marginalizes the young people who both lack intellect and sportsmanship...

- (125) Education must become a priority!
- (126) A lot of work needs to be done in order to make the system more effective. A lot of tax dollars could be saved by addressing the issues at their bases rather than putting a bandage over the problem. Instead of prisons, Texas should be putting more money on rehabilitation and education!!
- (127) Too many prisons have been created by a prison-industrial complex that does not address the real problems that cause crime.
- (128) More should be spent on education so people have many more viable options for livable wages with careers, not just employment.
- (129) Education is the most important form of prevention and rehabilitation. Not just education on 'don't be a criminal' but an all around grounding in basic school curriculum.
- (130) Once people are in prison, then we have a responsibility to help them too. Either you educated them before prison or you need to give them skills while they're there too.
- (131) Education is the key to many of our problems.
- (132) Education is the biggest problem in the state of Texas, if headway can be made with increasing graduation rates, crime will drop. Public high schools do not teach independence and accountability. Teachers are underpaid and as a result, largely unqualified to teach children as they become members of adult society. If a respectable salary (roughly a 50%-100% increase) could be given and requirements elevated such as at a university level, there would be better teachers in the system who would teach more effectively than twice as many less qualified teachers. When kids start learning instead of dropping out, there will be less demands on the criminal justice system.
- (133) Education is huge to the prevention of criminal activity. Petty and mischievous crimes are performed by people with no options. Therefore, a well educated individual, even though he or she may be below the poverty line, has more of an understanding of how the world works and how to deal with situations. Fix the schools and you will fix your problems with criminal activity. Stop punishing schools for poor performances instead bring tax dollars increase the resources and performances of low-performing schools/school districts. As a product of the inner-city, I have first hand experience on what a school without proper educational resources affects a child's way of thinking.
- (134) Education and access to work are of utmost importance in reducing recidivism.
- (135) EDUCATE! EDUCATE! EDUCATE!
- (136) It is in serious need of repair--more focus on preventative rather than curative is needed.
- (137) The federal and state drug laws have been repeatedly been shown to be ineffective. Much of the money spent on interdiction, prosecution, and incarceration would be better spent on treatment, and education.
- (138) Criminals were once innocent, once children. Their parents and society went wrong for them somewhere. In order to truly impact crime, the system needs to prevent the creation of the criminal mind. I think reforming the education system is necessary. Some kids need alternative types of education because their families are broken.
- (139) Crime prevention, and not the punishment of criminals, should be the role of the Criminal Justice System. Crime is a social problem, and simply tossing criminals in jail does not solve the problem. There needs to be more money and attention spent on social rehabilitation. Education, jobs programs, etc.
- (140) More money should be spent on rehabilitation and education.

- (141) Crime happens when people are poor, frustrated, hopeless, or mentally ill. Address these driving factors FIRST when people are young, and we won't need so many prisons. I don't particularly like my tax money being spent on a bunch of people sitting around doing nothing in a reinforced concrete building. I would much rather have it be spent on dealing with the root causes of the situation.
- (142) Better funding for education would greatly reduce the prison population!!
- (143) Believe system is broken as we need to get to the root of problem dealing with families at an early age to head off imprisonment. more family programs focusing on life issues and the problems they can cause.
- (144) As long as our schools are not supported financially and as long as they do not include more professional staffing to address problems that children are facing and if they fail to catch at risk youth before they end up in juvenile we will continue to see a climb in prison populations.
- (145) As a society, we need to ask ourselves how we can move away from using prisons to dispose of or hide the social problems that stem from systemic race and class problems. I think the best way to prevent crime is to provide a good education to all children, regardless of economic status. Public education must be supported collectively by tax-payers, and the quality must be comparable from rich to poor school districts.
- (146) Access to viable and effective educators and educational systems is the only long term solution to this state's and this country's criminal justice problems.
- (147) I feel that we need to back up to our Public School System. We should require schools to offer job training and graduation a requirement. If our students do not have a means of income..crime will follow. Also, more drug testing in public school without penalty..just help for them to get off drugs..and drugs are present in public school. Everyone working together. Counseling for family and student also needed before..heal the wound before these young people graduate or drop out of school.
- (148) Every possible effort should be made to prevent crime by attacking its root cause(s).
- (149) You can't throw money at the high school problem. The classes are so bad that you might as well quit and get a GED. The kids have no respect for the teachers. The classes I have visited the teachers just gave up and sat down. You will have to start much earlier to fix the problem. Also putting non English speaking kids in the class and expect everyone to wait on them to understand what is going on.
- (150) Texas should try harder to keep people out of prison in the first place. We need to focus on education, treatment and job skills.
- (151) I think Texas should spend more on prevention, in terms of education and outreach. I would bet there is a strong correlation between educational level achieved and probability of incarceration.
- (152) Resources should be targeted to Hispanics and Blacks and the schools should help prevent violence and substance abuse.
- (153) Spending on education and treatment is essential for this state to succeed in the world economy. I am especially concerned for individuals who are unable due to language deficiencies, transportation deficiencies, and mental illness to understand the legal systems and navigate through the systems. I am a public servant who sees many, many mentally ill people or people off their medication who are arrested and jailed simply because they lack the healthcare and treatment programs others can afford, travel to, or understand (due to language barriers).
- (154) An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure...

(155) Somehow there has to be a way to 'break the mold' so that our children and grandchildren will not behave in a manner that requires prison - impossible dream? - I hope not –

NECESSARY CHANGES TO THE PROBATION SYSTEM

- (1) When the legislature consolidated the criminal justice agencies under TDCJ in 1989, probation lost a very important organizational tool. We lost a board that understood community corrections. Giving the 'prison' board the responsibility for probation basically put the wolf in the henhouse. It continues to this day. With virtually no leadership or support from our existing state agency (CJAD), probation will never be an effective tool in keeping offenders out of prison. Since 1989 'prisons' have been in control of the purse strings. Changing this by creating another state agency is not a politically or fiscally popular thing to do, but allowing probation to have a decision making board that oversees our needs and can provide direction to our state agency can go a long way toward creating a system that is much more effective in keeping offenders out of prison.
- (2) I have been a probation officer for almost 2 years now and have a few suggestions. Foremost, caseloads. When you are seeing 90+ defendants each month there is not much time for quality casework. I've discussed this problem with 20+ year veterans of probation and was told that long ago it was 70% interaction with the defendant and 30% paperwork. Today it's just the opposite. For example, Supervision Plans. Who has time to read them, let alone the time to write one that will actually be followed, when you are seeing defendants every 15 to 30 min. More dollars need to be spent on the best resource, the people on the line doing the work. More money for more officers to lower caseloads to a working level. I don't know who came up with the figure of 95 defendant caseloads, but that is not a working level. In my opinion it would be closer to 65. Thanks for listening to my raving.
- (3) Probationers in my county are sent to drug treatment programs and there is a 90 day waiting period. They re-offend during this time and may lose the opportunity to attend a program.
- (4) We have got to work on the probation system so that it works for the convicted person instead of against him. A good probation system would be one that worked in a positive way instead of a threatening, negative way. There are many convicted people that can make it on probation if the system is supportive. Our system in our county is not supportive at all. They have the reputation of revocation at the first sign of failure on the part of the convicted.
- (5) Too much is asked of the community corrections professional. In order to make a difference in recidivism, crime, and protection of the community, more money is needed, smaller caseloads are a must (for all professionals - police, deputies, prosecutors CPS workers, etc.), and better responsiveness to the individual needs of individual human service departments needs to be applied. There is high turnover due to the stress related with community corrections. So, the majority of the work is being performed by people who are 22-28 years of age who don't plan on sticking around because of the bureaucracy.
- (6) Too many funding issues are tied to probation while prosecutors don't have monies tied to decisions they make. Prosecutors look like they are doing their job when they send

someone to prison even if the offender is non-violent. Make prosecutors funding be contingent upon alternatives offered in a plea agreement instead of just a 'good ol' boy' relationship with a defense attorney and see what happens to rehabilitation. Prison space needs to be saved for violent offenders! Revocations from probation tend to be 'blamed' on probation departments when the reality is prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges have much more power and authority in the decision to revoke a probationer. Probation Departments have to rely too much on supervisory fees for their operations. This sends a mixed message to the probationer. Legislators need to listen to Chief Probation Officers and/or probation employees within their respective districts/regions instead of TDCJ administrators when it comes to funding for probation departments. Probation Departments are autonomous in the sense that they answer to District/CCAL Judges and not the State. TDCJ does not know what individual probation departments need and never will, Texas is simply too big of a State for a governmental entity in Austin/Huntsville to know what is needed within the respective communities throughout this huge state. What the Hill Country needs might be different from what East Texas or West Texas needs in terms of meeting the needs of its probationers. Beyond that, probation departments have to deal with Judges who could and often do change every 4 years depending on a political climate. Judges aren't probation officers, prosecutors aren't probation officers, defense attorneys aren't probation officers, but they tend to be who makes decisions in the Courtroom. There is something wrong with that picture. Give probation departments money to create what they know works, not what a legislator thinks will work because it 'sounds good.' There is way too much focus on paperwork. Not enough focus on developing the relationship with the probationer. Caseloads are too high, not enough money is appropriated to community corrections, instead the money goes to the prisons. In a recent legislative session, the TDCJ director recommended a 50% reduction in funding for probation departments, that is one of the most ridiculous things I ever heard of. Offenders go to prison, they get 'sweet deals' from prosecutors who are just as overworked and really don't know the probationer and the offender is released with little to no treatment. But, in the moment of the sentence, everyone was happy, the prosecutor got his conviction (did his job), the defense attorney got his court-appointed attorney fee (he is happy for a 15 minute conversation with defendant behind bars with no idea what the word admonishment means) and the Judge just followed the plea agreement. The system is a revolving door. More money is needed for supervision, not prison.

- (7) More resources needed for treatment and probation services. More options other than release/incarceration.
- (8) The Texas Criminal Justice system spends too much money on prisons. We are incarcerating too many offenders who will very quickly return to society in worse shape than they went in. Prison does not rehabilitate it only makes the individual angry and puts them back out on the street with a reduced ability to work and live a productive life, support their family, etc. Individuals who commit crimes (nonviolent) should be held accountable, but should be left in the community under probation supervision. In this way they pay for their crime rather than tax payers. The state of Texas needs to spend more money on probation. Probation is neglected and given very little money to do a very important job. You will never be able to incarcerate everyone, but year after year more money is given to the prison system toward that goal of incarcerating every criminal. The state needs to wake up and put their money where it can be more effective -- better and more programs for probation.

- (9) I find it a bit disturbing that we spend 90% of the budget on prisons etc but only 10% on the rehabilitation process. I do think that probation officers and such should get a bit more help on reintroducing prisoners to the community.
- (10) The legislature should allocate more money for probation treatment programs and give these programs time to show results. Results do not happen overnight as implementation takes time.
- (11) TDCJ should invest in JOB TRAINING and placement assistance for probationers. Large fines placed on probationers are often the cause of revocation due to early discouragement about one's ability to complete probation. Fines should be related to income.
- (12) Spend more money on programs for Misdemeanor probation cases, where the chance of rehabilitation is greater than for Felony cases, thus preventing the Felony cases that go on probation and/or prison.
- (13) Remove the oversight of probation operations from the department of criminal justice and place it under the control of separate agency.
- (14) Probation should be separated into a separate agency, as it formerly was.
- (15) Probation is the most efficient and least expensive alternative in the criminal justice system. Probation is the neglected step-child of the agency and has not been permitted to show what it can do to recidivism rates and community corrections.
- (16) Probation no longer belongs under TDCJ. TDCJ does not have the expertise, or any legitimate interest in funding or understanding the front-end of the criminal justice system. We by far have the biggest offender population to work with and by far the smallest amount of the pie. There must be a serious commitment in placing the appropriate services that provide the similar delivery of services together once and for all.
- (17) PROBATION NEEDS TO HAVE MORE MONEY INJECTED INTO IT. PROBATION NEEDS TO BE LONGER NOT SHORTER AND MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS MUST BE ADDED. THERE ARE SMALLER DEPARTMENTS OUT THERE WITH GOOD SOLID PROGRAMS HAVING GOOD RESULTS. ALL TOO FREQUENTLY THE BIGGER DEPARTMENTS ARE BEING LOOKED AT BECAUSE OF THE #'S OF OFFENDERS AND THEY SUFFER FROM THE SAME PROBLEMS AS THE PRISONS, BECAUSE YOU LOSE EFFECTIVENESS WHEN THERE ARE TOO MANY DIFFERENCES IN HOW SUPERVISION IS BEING CONDUCTED.
- (18) Probation needs more funding to accomplish its awesome task.
- (19) Most, if not all of my personal exposure to the Texas Criminal Justice System has been through the Travis County Juvenile Court and Probation System. I think siblings on probation should have the same JPO, period. I also have noticed some vast discrepancies in levels of Juv. Court decisions, Juv. Probation enforcement, 'treatment creativity', and willingness to work with the family AS A FAMILY UNIT among Juvenile probation Officers in my county.
- (20) More resources need to be invested in the probation system for basic services. Special programs administered by CJAD have proved not to be particularly successful. New leadership is required at CJAD so that the division's credibility can be renewed.
- (21) More money for community corrections to reduce the caseload size, and employ more officers for field units.
- (22) I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT MORE MONEY SHOULD BE SENT TO PROBATION TO ELEVATE NUMBERS OF PROBATIONERS BEING SENT TO PRISON FOR TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS. WE NEED MORE OFFICERS IN THE FIELD TO

HANDLE CASELOADS. GIVE US THE MONEY, THE OFFICERS, AND GET THE JUDGES TO GET OFF TECHNICAL REVOCATIONS AND THE PURCHASE OF BRICKS WILL STOP.

- (23) I work in probation and we need more drug treatment programs for those that cannot afford it!
- (24) Those working in prisons, parole boards, probation officers have tough jobs and need some help in the form of more staff, more education and more pay.
- (25) I believe that Texas should have probation for all non-violent crimes, instead of each city or county having its own rules about this. In some counties, people have had their criminal history erased, while others in another county who have committed the same offense may find this offense permanently on their record, which is not fair.
- (26) By evaluating a probation officer on whether or not they can find the formerly incarcerated jobs, I think it would increase the likeliness that criminals would have jobs and would decrease the likeliness that they would commit a crime a second time.
- (27) I strongly believe that community supervision departments can make a difference if given adequate funding to do our jobs and provide needed treatment and educational programs to offenders. Prisons aren't doing the job and the State can't afford to keep loading them up with prisoners. Community supervision is a less costly alternative.
- (28) Separate Probation and Parole from TDCJ. TDCJ places emphasis on prisons (which it should; however, it does it to the detriment of probation and parole). CJAD is ill-functioning division of TDCJ and the administration of TDCJ seems unwilling to address the problems there. The current director does not communicate effectively with the field of probation, works about 4 or 5 hours per day, will not delegate any decision making to her staff requiring all decisions to come to her, yet is unwilling or unable to make decisions. CJAD staff are extremely frustrated because of a lack of leadership.
- (29) I have been in the Criminal Justice System in Texas for the past 21 years. I have only worked in the probation field, but have had communication from parole officers, prison employees and the general public. I believe that 60 percent of our probationers are like you and I and can self correct, 20 percent have some form of mental illness or retardation and 20 percent we will never touch(hardcore criminals). The latter being the ones which facilities or prisons are needed for and the large percentage need structure, treatment centers, probation officers who work with people, not against people. We as a whole (Texas) need to change our ways of doing business. We need to go in the direction, I am seeing at this time, that is 'What works' Evidence Based Practices' Best Practices', whatever you wish to call it, I call it common sense and the 'golden rule'. I believe the reason Texas is so far behind in educating our children because we don't pay our teachers enough, so the good ones do something else. It is the same thing with probation officers. Everything, I have noted you all probably already know, but it is time we do something and quit talking, just like we tell those on probation. But the key here is let them be a part of their probation and it will work. I would have not stayed in this field so long if I did not believe it will work and people can change. Thanks for letting me vent some frustrations and some ideas.
- (30) I feel there should be more funding to probation to address the offenders' needs such as: education, jobs, parenting classes, cognitive behavioral programs and treatment programs. I think this would reduce the number of offenders sentenced to prison and reduce recidivism.
- (31) Probation should be a greater option before imprisonment.
- (32) I believe this system is in need of comprehensive reform. I believe that budget cuts have

diminished the rehabilitative ability of prisons. I believe that the focus should be on prevention of entry (successful probation).

- (33) I believe parole and probation need to remain separate agencies. More money needs to be appropriated to probation so departments will be sufficiently funded to reduce caseload size and implement evidence based practices and cognitive behavior groups for probationers.
- (34) Funding directed towards probation needs to be allocated on the basis of probation program performance. Probation officers cannot be held accountable for success unless there are well designed research-based treatment programs available to meet the treatment needs of the population. Unfortunately, there is a great disparity in the availability of treatment resources across the state without consideration for need, program design, or program performance. I do not believe that TDCJ as a whole can be effective until they invest in probation and allocate resources only from a performance/need based perspective.
- (35) Broken! If Harris County was a state it would rank 3rd in the number of people sent to prison. The Harris County Probation Department does not have the freedom to do probation work and ultimately implement effective supervision as the policies are dictated by judges who are all former prosecutors.
- (36) As long as probation is under TDCJ, it will always be an afterthought, except in times when the prisons are full and the system needs probation to help relieve the overcrowding. That is the way it has been for 16 years, and that's the way it will always be until probation is taken out from under the prison system's control.
- (37) We need to offer more programs and faith-based initiatives to make probation a more effective tool, without making probation a money pit.
- (38) Treating the underlying behavioral issues and educating prisoners/probationers about dysfunctional behaviors could help these individuals to create better lives in the future.
- (39) Those who are in prison or on probation need to be in programs that address their problem whether it be drugs, anger issues, etc.
- (40) Prevention of future crime should be the goal. Offering these people education and employment is necessary so that their probation will be successful.
- (41) The budget seems skewed towards the prison system when there is in fact greater need outside of it-- parole, probation, and treatment options.
- (42) Our society's problems that arise from drug abuse are the result of misguided policies at the national level. Until we as a nation face the reality that drug use cannot be eradicated any more than alcohol use could be eliminated during Prohibition, we are going to spend an inordinate percentage of criminal justice funding putting folks behind bars. Unfortunately, under the current legal system, the Texas Criminal Justice system has few options. The only rational approach, in my opinion, is to place as many non-violent drug users (especially recreational users) on probation or in treatment programs as possible.
- (43) Texas needs sentence reform, probation/parole reform especially as it relates to the length of time an offender pays fees and the manner in which community supervision is managed.
- (44) Texas courts rely too heavily on incarceration. A former head of the TDCJ Board, about five years ago, said that 25 percent of the prisoners in TDCJ did not need to be there. Many other individuals who have studied prison demographics, prison policy, etc., including myself, believe that the number is closer to 50 percent. There are effective alternatives to incarceration including treatment for addictions, education, and greater use of the probation and parole systems.

- (45) Mandatory Credit toward probation sentences of 2 days for every one day spent in a CCF or SAFP should be given for those who SUCCESSFULLY complete the programs.
- (46) The prisons are clogged with non-violent drug offenders who, for the benefit of society and the justice system, should be put on probation and given mandatory treatment programs.
- (47) First-time, non-violent, drug offenders should be offered drug treatment and treatment for problems that LEAD to drug use and abuse. They should then be subjected to drug testing through the probation system.
- (48) Don't incarcerate non-violent offenders unless they refuse supervision: supervise them on probation with threat of incarceration. Ensure prisoners as well as probationers have a trade which will support them legally.
- (49) Most people who go to prison for petty crimes and violating probation end up switching to a life of higher crime when they leave.
- (50) Not enough is spent on drug/alcohol rehab, & parole, probation supervision.
- (51) More money needs to be allocated to substance abuse treatment both inside the prisons and while an offender is on probation and/or parole.
- (52) The parole and probation drug tests are easily fooled and a joke.
- (53) Laws need changed to lessen the number of years for probation sentences available to the courts. This would immediately reduce a person's exposure to prison for technical violations only.
- (54) We need to deal with the 95% who will get out and reduce the 65% recidivism, by spending more money on probation, parole case management {drug courts in Houston is one example} to guide ex-offenders back into society.
- (55) Why not try more parole and probation to see if that would work better than incarceration.
- (56) There should be more accountability for the parole and probation officers regarding their success (or failure) to assist those re-entering society.
- (57) The system has its strong points but the probation/parole system is flawed when there is no accountability on the part of probation and parole officers. At the least, success rate incentives may encourage more of them to care about what actually happens to the people they are assigned and demand more accountability.
- (58) The incarcerated, those on parole and those on probation are the 'clients' of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Yet, TDCJ does not provide client-centered services. Rather, it assumes that the client is always wrong. It is little wonder, then, that Texas does a poor job in rehabilitating prisoners and in lowering recidivism rates.
- (59) Parole and Probation must be improved to reduce recidivism. Regardless of what a person has done, parole and probation must be taught some people skills in order to recognize that the parolees or probationers are human beings and not as individuals that will continue to endanger society and find ways to send them back to prison. I have witness this personally and how the parole supervisors and officers talk to the individuals. It is very demeaning.
- (60) Put more money in probation/parole.
- (61) Probation/parole officers should be held accountable for their actions. They should not be shielded from liability due to improper judgments and reports to the court. They should be honest and truthful to their clients.
- (62) Spend some more funding on probation and parole and increase educational and vocational programming for both inmates and probationers.
- (63) More funding on parole and probation tracking.
- (64) Look at parole/probation officers' caseloads, their responsibilities, and accountability
- (65) It's cumbersome and ineffective, especially in its probation and parole responsibilities. It

does a good job keeping offenders in prison

- (66) I feel that non-violent individuals should have their civil rights (i.e. voting) restored upon their completion of their sentences, including parole/probation operations.
- (67) Better pay for parole/probation officers to attract smarter more industrious applicants.
- (68) I think it is a shame that Probation/Parole officers have to spend thousands of dollars on their education and don't get paid enough to make a good living. They spend 10 years or more paying for their education to get paid less than what some of the people with no education on probation get paid for manual labor. Many have to have second jobs to make ends meet. An Officer's job is stressful enough taking on all the problems of people who have no life skills, have drug or alcohol addiction problems, financial problems, relationship problems. It also puts an Officer at risk to have to work 2nd jobs where probationers work. I believe that Officers of Specialized Caseloads who have to put more time and energy into their work and do more home visits than what Officers on regular caseloads do, should have a higher pay rate. Nobody wants to work harder for the same amount of pay as those who have less stress because they deal with more compliant probationers than the Specialized Caseload Officer. I believe we need to put more money into the Substance Abuse Treatment programs--both out-patient and In-patient. Life Skills, GED, and Employment help are vital to helping probationers/parolees succeed on probation or parole.
- (69) 'You can't have a good purgatory if you don't have a good hell'. Probation is not a good tool unless you have a 'good' punishment (Prison) for probationers that violate the rules.

RE-ENTRY PROBLEMS OUTSIDE OF TDCJ AND SUGGESTIONS

- (1) We need to quit locking up non-violent offenders and turning them into felons. The most serious issue is non violent drug offenders, makes absolutely no sense to turn them into felons, we mark them for life and give them very little chance at a decent life by making them felons.
- (2) When they get out of prison, it takes a lot of help, money wise and taking them to all the meetings and all the money for everything they are required to do. This is why so many go back, they can't afford everything and have no help.
- (3) Not enough places that will rent to ex-offenders.
- (4) Most WILL get out one day and what is there for them? They are untrained, unprepared to enter society and society does not want them. Their felonies haunt them forever - no matter how well they do and more and more job opportunities for us are disappearing.
- (5) I am fully in support of broader educational opportunities for inmates, and I believe state officials should also help inmates leaving prison to get jobs and schooling because it is so difficult, especially for those with a felony record, and the time and money spent in these pursuits would most likely reduce recidivism as well. For someone who has spent months or years locked up, it is very difficult to reenter the 'real world,' and some return to crime because they are not accustomed to and cannot handle the pressures of society. It would be incredibly beneficial to at least guide them in the right direction.
- (6) There needs to be a program to solicit employers to willingly hire returned felons.
- (7) When someone is branded with a FELONY, then that person cannot get a lease in a safe

area (for herself and children) much less get credit. Thus, Texas keeps the person from leaving the bad environment for ten years after the case, when it can finally be sealed. No one hires you. Universities and schools will not accept you. You are forced to live on minimum wage, but IF you have 'too much' education, then even those jobs are not available. Only temp jobs remain, providing little stability for family.

- (8) The system should be in place to make society better and safer, not simply to seek retribution. People who have committed crimes have much trouble readjusting to society after release and have high readmission rates which shows that the prison system does not currently work as it is set up. We must try something different to reduce crime and make society safer for all.
- (9) Group therapy would be a great help to those just released and to incorporate their families would give them a safe place to vent their frustrations that will occur due to rejection in finding housing, jobs, etc.
- (10) The incarceration of non-violent offenders is wasteful, both for the tax payer and, in the limitation of future employment and other opportunity, for the offender. We need to rethink what we criminalize and how we approach people who engage in these types of behaviors.
- (11) Maybe business owners can be given incentives for employing non violent criminals etc.
- (12) I would urge the state to build a few real pre-release facilities. These facilities would house offenders that are within 1 year of release. The dress code would be non-TDCJ, the staff would be focused on reentry and transition, there would be work release programs that connect the offenders to employers and the job market and insure employment upon release, and would have the added benefit of them having a savings account upon release. The facility would have an earned weekend furlough program to reconnect the offender to their family and community. This facility would ready the offender for release physically, mentally and spiritually. That was we would not be taking people out of max. unit facilities a 2 AM in the morning and dropping them on our communities at 9 AM the same day. If the offenders sent to the pre-release facility of this type and failed, they would be sent back to the TDCJ maximum facility.
- (13) The problem seems to be the incorporation back into society and the ability of people to find work, affordable housing, etc. when they do get out.
- (14) I feel that once you have completed the sentence you were given that should be completely erased from your record. A person discharged from prison does not have a chance to become a good citizen if he/she is tagged as a felon. This is unheard of. Our corrupt justice system seems to never want to give anyone a chance to lead a normal life again and become a productive citizen again.
- (15) Right now, many people would go back into illegal activities, or even rather commit another crime IN ORDER to be incarcerated again, since they have no real chance at survival in mainstream society.
- (16) Part of the problem with the Texas Criminal Justice system is indeed the continuing marginalization of convicted 'felons,' even upon release. Indeed, the mark of being a criminal stays with that person until his or her death, which is appropriate in some cases, but not at all fitting in many others.
- (17) There is a lack of jobs and blacklisting of ex-cons.
- (18) More funds should be allowed the private section to contract with the state, especially in the area of aftercare.
- (19) Need to make more jobs, housing to prisoners released from jail. At present a person who

- has a felony can't receive food stamps.
- (20) Need to have law to not discriminate against persons with criminal backgrounds that are more than 5 years and stayed clean. They have to work to support their family.
 - (21) My observation of inmates ministered to over the years is that they really don't mind coming back to prison. Life is easy for them in prison. Once out, no one wants to hire them. They have no transportation for work or for reporting to parole, they can't rent an apartment and many of them have no family to help them. They come out destined to failure.
 - (22) People do not become rehabilitated with a stigma stuck to them for life for making a bad choice or mistake. Using treatment programs instead would make it easier on the budget, help more and reduce that stigma.
 - (23) My largest concern about criminal justice is that there are few employment avenues available for prisoners once they leave prison, which can create an environment where recidivism is the natural result.
 - (24) Maybe this is already a part of the program and I just don't know it, but here goes. For select offenders who qualify, a monitored in/out/back in, prison/work transition for the last year of their sentence. After that, have a one-year housing opportunity (like half-way houses) outside prison to get ex-offenders back into work and family life. I've always thought something like a nursing-home setup, with individual rooms, but all centrally located would be workable. It would have to have access to transportation to get to work.
 - (25) If prisoners know they have something to come home to after being released (e.g., school, job, stable home life) then their chances of returning to crime may decrease.
 - (26) A young man asked me last week, how do I stop selling drugs, it is the only way I can support myself, my family and my children. He is correct he can't support them on minimal wage jobs. I have an African American friend who is 28 and male who has a felony. The felony is over 7 years old but he still can't get a job with pay to even pay his child support... not to mention a job with a future or benefits. There is no wonder why so many of these young men return to drugs and crime... it is the only way out for them.
 - (27) Overzealous felony convictions make it very difficult for people who have been involved in criminal justice to get jobs, which promotes recidivism. We really need to rethink the way we handle NON-VIOLENT criminals.
 - (28) Providing more education and job opportunities (including education and incentive for employers) for felons and working to remove the barriers that effectively ban felons from a huge portion of the job market will allow for much more successful re-entry and lower recidivism rates. The latter will also result in a stronger economy and less money spent on incarceration.
 - (29) People with felony offenses have a hard time getting employment and housing. This causes depression and ends up having them develop poor self images. There has to be some assistance in these areas. Also educational loans and educational assistance are not available to those who have committed a felony offense. This does not encourage them to develop themselves into better people and cause them to move forward with their lives.
 - (30) Possession charges should not be so harsh. With a criminal record, citizens with minor drug offenses will be less likely to get jobs, and therefore more likely to find ways to make money in the informal sector, including breaking the law.
 - (31) I believe there should be legislation passed that prohibit companies from having policies against hiring ex-felons. That is the reason most people return to prison because no one will give them a chance and they have no choice.

- (32) Texas cannot just keep throwing people in prison and think we are protecting society. Criminals get out of prison, and then have difficulty finding employment. There needs to be a system that offers ex-convicts support once they are released. Many of these people may want to change, but society rejects them and they turn back to crime.
- (33) Help them after they are released until they get on their feet.
- (34) It would be good if there were no waiting lists to get into treatment upon getting out of jail, because that allows too much time for prisoners to get back into drugs and crime before they even have a chance for treatment.
- (35) There are very few programs designed to assist offenders and ex-offenders in obtaining work outside the state jail system.
- (36) I think it is time to consider an early release program that puts an offender in a residential setting for more than a year, while he learns to adjust to the free world under the watchful eye of the program monitors. His compulsory employment would largely pay for the program and set aside some funds to start his new life when he graduates. This program would use a variety of mentors to help the offender.
- (37) I feel that there should be more emphasis on educating and vocational training for inmates, as well as programs for inmates to help the community out such as making moldings for handicap children to walk, dentures, etc., and these types of inmates who take advantage of such programs should be paroled with a job with someone of such trades. Making it less chance of them returning to their old life and prison and in turn prisoner's who have children will be supported with child support. As it stands now, prisoner's are required to look for work and are only hired by people to do hard labor, thus prisoner's are returning to their old life style and returning to prison.
- (38) There is a need to have the laws changed for some one who has paid their debt to society, they should not be penalized continually for their crimes once released. They need to be able to work to support themselves and their families. I can understand if they've embezzled not being allowed to work in a bank but to shut them out of jobs such as office positions in customer service, too harsh. I don't approve of them not being able to received funds for education as well, I would not have been able to go back to school if it weren't for government loans. I just don't feel they are being treated fairly in a lot of areas.
- (39) Having previously worked for the Texas Criminal Justice System with direct dealings with offenders and now working for Project RIO, I have had the opportunity to see both sides of the coin, so to speak. Both offenders and ex-offenders need access to programs and resources that are going to help make them successful. Upon release, I have found that ex-offenders do not have access to identification, housing, the job market and even clothing. They lack self-esteem and the things that may help them at least gain a little of it. In my opinion, it is the State's and society's responsibility to ensure that offenders receive at least the basic things they need prior to release - the least of which is their identification cards, i.e., birth certificates, social security cards, DD214, etc. I realize that Project RIO (inside) is supposed to handle this; however, I'm dealing with a caseload of approximately 150 men and women, I can tell you that at least, 70% of them had no form of identification when they were released.
- (40) The thing I hate the most is that the system is such that it sets up the prisoner for failure outside of prison--becoming a productive citizen is nearly impossible because you can't really get loan money for an education, and many schools may not take you for having been in prison--depending on your crime.
- (41) Deferred adjudication system needs to be reformed. My sister attempted suicide after being

raped 2 years ago and unfortunately used a controlled substance. She was sent to jail for 6 months and given deferred adjudication. She is now out of jail, has received therapy for the rape, has a 4.0 GPA in biomedical sciences and hopes to be a researcher. She is a brilliant woman and could greatly benefit society, however given the difficulties she experienced in finding an apartment on deferred adjudication, she will probably have trouble getting into graduate school despite her intelligence, perfect grades, glowing recommendations from faculty members. In short, she will probably have to attend school and work abroad. She will probably cure cancer one day, but because of the draconian deferred adjudication program, she will be forced to work in another country. First-time, non-violent, drug offenders should be offered drug treatment and treatment for problems that LEAD to drug use and abuse. They should then be subjected to drug testing through the probation system, and then have their records expunged after a year or so. This would reserve beds for real criminals, and not forever ruin the lives of those who made a mistake.

- (42) Jobs for felons. Our society doesn't forgive mistakes. EVER....my son was lucky, he had a good skill and was able to go to work the second day of looking for a job. Other people who didn't have a skill when they went in are worse off now because they are branded and still don't have a skill. So what are they suppose to do after the 3 months of food stamps run out? and your ego is beat down from everyone telling you 'no'. Get the senate, congressmen who ever to change the system to give good credits for years staying out of trouble. Then after 10 are so years the felony goes off your record and you are a human being again. Instead of a felony at 19 staying with you the rest of your life.
- (43) Making education a top priority and helping ex-prisoners find sufficient jobs are more important than having televisions and basketball courts in prisons.
- (44) I believe that Texas laws make it almost impossible for a parolee to succeed. There should be some basic programs to first help them find a place to live. Most apartment complexes will not rent to those with a felony conviction. If they can't find a place to live or a job, what options does that leave for them?
- (45) Once a person is on parole, they need additional assistance in getting employment, readjusting to living in the free world and learning to make good choices for their continued freedom.
- (46) More aftercare programs and aid for parolees and their family members.

OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

- (1) Fund the old Texas Criminal Justice Policy Council so that rational recommendations regarding the criminal justice system can be made. Dr. Fabelo was informed and informative; the Governor and Legislature should be ashamed that they failed to supply funding for this service.
- (2) Separate Probation and Parole from TDCJ. TDCJ places emphasis on prisons (which it should; however, it does it to the detriment of probation and parole). CJAD is ill-functioning division of TDCJ and the administration of TDCJ seems unwilling to address the problems there. The current director does not communicate effectively with the field of probation, works about 4 or 5 hours per day, will not delegate any decision making to her staff requiring all decisions to come to her, yet is unwilling or unable to make decisions.

- CJAD staff are extremely frustrated because of a lack of leadership.
- (3) I believe parole and probation need to remain separate agencies. More money needs to be appropriated to probation so departments will be sufficiently funded to reduce caseload size and implement evidence based practices and cognitive behavior groups for probationers.
 - (4) The judicial system needs to address the length of parole. Statistics show that after 3 years there is less than a 1% chance of re-offending. Some would say those statistics are found after less than 3 years. There should not be more than 5 years on parole. It is a drain on the parole system and on the former offenders because of the emotional damage that is done to them having to remain in the 'system' for so long. They need to be able to move forward and get on with their lives. It would free up parole officers to attend to those newly released and to have lighter caseloads and be more effective in their jobs. Parole officers also need to be better trained to help the ex-offender reintegrate into society.
 - (5) I honestly think the 'Umbrella agency' TDCJ has become one huge bureaucracy giving power to the Institutional Division (ID). Since its creation the executive director of this agency has always been chosen from a field of career ID officials. If the Board of the TDCJ continues to exist I would suggest the TDCJ executive director position be eliminated and have each of the division directors be accountable for their individual divisions and report directly to the Board. If that is impossible, the Board needs to look to professionals outside the ID to operate the TDCJ.
 - (6) Eliminate CJAD. A wasteful division that does nothing to enhance the probation system in Texas.
 - (7) Too Large and Cumbersome. One agency cannot be all things to all people. Let Institutions be the best they can and let Community Corrections be the best they can. With one 'Board' and one administration someone is going to suffer. The legislature can and does see the Institutions because they are 'Brick and Mortar' it is much more difficult to visualize Community Corrections. Consequently, prisons get more % of the limited money that is available.
 - (8) Wardens run 'plantation' type operations, usually ignoring policy that comes out of Huntsville. The 'Cases' given to prisoners is often in retaliation rather than actually warranted. The whole prison system needs outside oversight in the form of NON paid TDCJ employees to give balance to a very unbalanced operation.
 - (9) The School District run for TCJS is a GED program and should not classify itself as a school district. From what I've seen, school administrators don't see a distinction between teachers and guards and this leads to an uncomfortable learning environment. The problem, as I see it, is accountability. There is none. Someone should investigate if our tax dollars are being wisely spent by the Windam School District.
 - (10) In trying to save money, the TDCJ should look at better scheduling for inmates and staff alike. Maintaining full staffing 24/7 is ridiculous. At 11:00 pm, ALL inmates should be secured in their cells to sleep. A reduced staff can manage them with staff relief and overseeing sleeping inmates. Should an emergency occur, staff can be pulled to the emergency while the inmates remain asleep and locked up. Then, at 7:00 am, the full day staff can report. Cells can be opened for bathing and dressing, and preparation for the day at 7:30am. (sick call at this time with these inmates having the later breakfast). Breakfast at 8:30am - allowing the food workers to go to their jobs at 8:00am. Two shifts of a meal are needed, with outdoor time for the non-eating group and then change around for the first eating group. At 9:30 am, inmates should be at work or in class. Those that cannot work

should be given some useful/purposeful job to do. From 12:00pm to 1:00 pm is the lunch period. Again, with two shifts, the inmates should get some outside time when the others are eating (in times of rain, time in a gym or other facility is appropriate). After lunch, the inmates should either be going to classes or work. At 3:00 the guard shift would change. Dinner from 5:00pm to 6:00 pm - with the alternate eating group being allowed to have outside time in daylight times or gym time during the winter times. In the evening, the inmates should be allowed to go to the library, watch TV, play board games, or other appropriate relaxing activities. ALL inmates should be required to write at least one letter a week to family or friends. This can be done in the evening or on the weekend. ALL inmates should return to their cells by 9:30 pm, have until 10:00 to clean their cells, and then from 10:00 to 10:30 have quiet time to read. Lights out and cells secured then for the shift change at 11:00. Routine is good for development of good habits. And, it allows for normalization of meals...eating breakfast at 3 or 4 am is ludicrous. On the weekends, the routine can be adjusted for religious or other activities. But the timing of meals and the shifts can remain the same. Each inmate deserves one day off from work and they should choose if it is Saturday or Sunday. For Muslims, they may choose Friday and work both Saturday and Sunday. During the typical work or class times, the inmates should be doing something constructive - studying in the library, doing crafts, writing letters, even taking naps. Television should be kept to a very minimum. Visitation should be encouraged to keep family and friends in touch with the inmate. Inmates should be kept in the closest facility to his/her home of record to facilitate family visits.

- (11) I believe that TDCJ should stay more informed in the drug rehab programs and stop lying about each other and trying to put blame on each other.
- (12) MORE agencies/regulators reviewing each unit to make sure that it is run properly, and that the prison meets a better standard.
- (13) Any large-scale treatment endeavor we undertake needs to have a solid half-way house safety net and properly accredited staff. The main reason the SAFP-F initiative did not take was because the project moved ahead too quickly. When all those beds opened, you did not have the staff to effectively execute the program in-house, and then when the most graduates went back to their home environment, there was no safety net.
- (14) The TCJS has changed my life for the better. However, there are several areas that continue the pattern of criminal activity. For example, the community service program requires that you complete 7 hours each day you perform community service. In reality, you actually only perform 'community service' for 1-3 hours, while still receiving 7 hours of credit. This is approved by the individuals who run the program for the TCJS.
- (15) It is very foolish to structure a substance abuse service separate and distinct from the Mental Health Service. The substance abuse services should be under the umbrella of mental health services and separated so that the mental health service is artificially removed from considering this issue in the treatment of their patients as it is currently structured.
- (16) The cj system has made some strides in improving collaboration with the mental health system. Another area that should be improved is collaboration with Child Protective Services. CPS, Mental Health Clinics and Probation Departments share so many clients and are not aware of it. Services are being duplicated and money is being wasted, literally wasted. The client is so confused especially if they are mentally ill, their kids are being taken away and they are being threatened with jail time. It is time for TDCJ to put forth effort in educating the whole system, this includes Judges, prosecutors, clerks, police department, sheriff's offices, CPS, Mental Health Clinics. Collaboration is the key. Attach funding to

this gap and people will begin to want to collaborate. Just follow the money, because the prison system (ID, not CJAD) gets so much money, they are greedy, think they know what is best.

FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS AND CHAPLAINCY

- (1) I am an ex-offender who was afforded drug treatment thorough SAFPF in 1994-1995 at Havins Unit in Brownwood, TX. The program coupled with a complete surrender to Jesus Christ has completely changed my life. Now, I'm giving back to society and actively do some 51 TDCJ Units and perform counseling services to literally tens of thousands of people state wide through my newly founded C.O.O.L. Ministries, Inc. www.coolministries.net. Please consider more treatment opportunities to help people change from the inside out. In His Grip, Boyd L. Harrell 281-687-8366
- (2) While visiting an inmate at Michaels Unit, he told me that he made more money selling drugs than any educational program could promise him and said that when he got out of prison, he would go back to selling drugs. He went through our 'Mentor' program and accepted Christ as his savior and he was a changed man from that time on. I was mentoring him for 9 years. Inmates have to have a change from within or no educational program will ever take the place of making thousands in drugs.
- (3) We need more units like the Carol Vance Unit in Sugarland. I know some who have successfully completed their stay there and are productive, rehabilitated men who contribute to society. Certainly, the prison environment lends well to behavior control, but a change in heart and attitude is necessary to succeed in the real world. More dedicated, well trained Christian mentors are needed in the system. You know why. The stats cannot be wrong.....
- (4) Increase the funding for facilities such as Carroll Vance in Richmond, TX.. so that more inmates can receive a Faith Based foundation before returning to society. -Allow churches to become more involved with ongoing programs.
- (5) I know that the only thing that will work for all human beings is that we have to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. I recommend that you contact Teen Challenge in Midland, Texas and talk to them about their programs that they have set up. People that attend those programs get rehabilitated. Thank you, Irene Favila 806-293-4457
- (6) I feel I have first hand knowledge concerning these issues because not only do I have family that are correctional officers, I have a brother that is in prison, but I also Volunteer with the Chaplain's office. I have seen not only the effects with my family, each with different issues, but also the contact that I have with the offenders and their family. I can not stress strongly enough how important that the Chaplain's Department is within these fences. A lot of the time, sad, but true, this is the only contact that the majority of the offenders have with a person that can mentor them. The classes that are provided by the volunteers are the foundation of change. The Church services are the beginning of change for these men. You see the change, the officers see the change, the family sees the change, and there is now hope, where there was none. If a man is to be rehabilitated, you must provide him with direction. The Chaplain's of TDCJ are that direction. They are the mentors not only for the offender, but for the staff. Again this is not some pipe dream, this

is something that I can attest to for my family. I plead with the State of Texas to not only continue, but to provide additional funds for these services.

- (7) Chaplaincy plays a significant in reducing recidivism. Chaplaincy has been reduced by 1/3 in recent years and at the same time has been requested to assume other programming, as well as its own. Chaplaincy staffing in the State of Texas is way below National Standards, both in regard to number of offenders per Chaplain and Chaplaincy salary.
- (8) The TDCJ needs to increase the number of chaplains per capita of inmates. The current ratio of 1 chaplain per 500 inmates is much too difficult. Chaplains provide not only spiritual support to the inmates, but also emotional and mental support to the inmates and families. One person can only spread himself/herself so thin. The TDCJ Chaplaincy recovers 100% of its operating costs, and contributes to every mission critical function. Chaplains have received only one pay-group raise in 40+ years. It's past time that this issue was addressed.
- (9) Chaplains recover their entire operating costs, contribute to every mission critical function, and were reduced to 100 in TDCJ from 150 a couple of years ago. The FBOP standard is 1 per 500 inmates. The TDCJ Chaplains should have a career ladder and deserve a raise. You can see a lot of info at www.preciousheart.net/chaplaincy, and a compilation of the data of the only TDCJ survey of chaplains in TDCJ's history - a survey cancelled after compilation, but never finished. Chaplains do a great job with so little. They facilitate 90% of all volunteerism in TDCJ, but that is never reflected clearly in TDCJ's annual Volunteer Report. By TDCJ's own records on volunteers alone, Chaplaincy recovers entire operating costs.
- (10) TDCJ Chaplaincy recovers 100% of its operating costs, contribute to every mission critical function, and are only 100 today, cut from 150 a few years ago--though the Fed. Bureau of Prison standard is 1 chaplain per 500 inmates. Chaplains have received only one pay-group raise in 40+ years. It's time to give them more.
- (11) Chaplaincy recovers more than its operating costs, contribute to every mission critical function. Today there are only about 100 chaplains, cut from 150 a few years ago. The Federal Bureau of Prisons standard is 1 chaplain per 500 inmates. TDCJ Chaplains have received only one pay-group raise in more than 40 years. Isn't it time to give them justice.
- (12) TRAINED TDCJ chaplains are very important in the CJ system. They seem to be lacking in numbers. To me chaplain presence is very important and their number could be increased. The state should also see that they are paid a fair wage for their service and given periodic wage increases. They should be required to have 4 units of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) and a theology degree.
- (13) I HAVE A GOOD FRIEND WHO WORKS AS A CHAPLAIN AND IT MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE TDCJ CHAPLANINCY RECOVERS 100% OF ITS OPERATING COSTS, CONTRIBUTE TO EVERY MISSION CRITICAL FUNCTION AND THEY HAVE BEEN CUT FROM 150 TO 100 EVEN THOUGH THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISON STANDARD IS 1 CHAPLIN PER 500 INMATES. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT CHAPLAINS HAVE RECEIVED ONLY ONE PAY-GROUP RAISE IN 40 YEARS. KNOWING THAT EVERYTHING ELSE HAS GONE UP DRASTICALLY IN THAT FORTY YEARS DON'T YOU THINK THAT IT IS PAST TIME TO RAISE THEIR PAY? I KNOW MY FRIEND HAS A HEART FOR THE WORK THAT HE DOES BUT WHEN HE HAS TO DRIVE A LESS THAN RELIABLE VEHICLE BECAUSE HE IS STRUGLING TO JUST TO MAKE EVERYDAY LIVING EXPENSES SOMETHING IS WRONG.

- (14) I believe the staff of each unit would be well served by a Chaplain that worked for both the needs of the incarcerated and the staff. It seems to me that little is done in recognition of the work of the staff. Also, the units each need a fulltime staff of the Chaplaincy (one Chaplaincy staff person per about 500 residents) in order to properly serve the people at the prison, both the incarcerated and the staff. Additional funding for the Chaplaincy would serve the goals of TDCJ and of our society by helping to rehabilitate the incarcerated and in ministry to the staff. Thank you for your consideration of these people - they are often a forgotten people.
- (15) The only thing that reduces recidivism is practice of and adherence to some sort of religious belief. More chaplains should be hired and they should have paid help in the form of clerks.
- (16) I am involved with religious programming as a volunteer in the TDCJ. I think that the chaplaincy should be expanded meeting the federal guidelines for 1 chaplain per 500 inmates. I think the chaplains are overworked and underpaid.
- (17) Faith-based programs staffed by volunteers seem pretty effective in building hope and skills; that, supported by a strong chaplaincy, would be a priority in the turning around of these lives.
- (18) They need to add more Chaplains.
- (19) We need more chaplains.
- (20) I believe we need more religious treatment programs and much less incarceration. Many more chaplains are needed. A single chaplain cannot effectively minister in a large prison, and especially cannot when he/she is assigned two prison units. I believe more authority should be given long time approved prison ministry volunteers. I have been volunteering as a religious volunteer for 21 years. Most prison staff (wardens/majors) are very receptive to the weekend crusades and religious services held inside the prisons. I believe that the chaplains are inundated with unnecessary paperwork which gives them much less time for counseling and ministry. I believe that the office of chaplaincy in TDCJ is tremendously underfunded, and that chaplains are underpaid. I believe chaplains should receive overtime pay for such things as emergency call ins on severe inmate sicknesses and/or inmate family death messages. I believe that chaplains should receive per diem for traveling/motel expense when attending state mandated meetings to cover ALL their expenses.
- (21) Increase pay raises for chaplains.
- (22) More money for chaplaincy.
- (23) Make compensation for TDCJ Chaplains commensurate with that paid to similarly educated and experienced chaplains in such areas as Military, Hospitals, Federal Prisons.
- (24) Volunteers who work with prisoners in faith and character based residential programs may, through the use of donated computers, deliver education programs, greatly expanding basic adult education at a fraction of the cost. They cannot deliver certificates, but bring inmates to a point where Windham School District can certify them.
- (25) We need to utilize the Faith community and its volunteers to the fullest extent to work with offenders in areas of rehabilitation and community aftercare programs.
- (26) We need to offer more programs and faith-based initiatives to make probation a more effective tool, without making probation a money pit.
- (27) Focus on job/career once released. WIN WIN for everyone! There are plenty of churches willing and able to begin helping, if the state would allow them to get involved and provide part of what would be needed as a family all works together toward release.
- (28) Access to religious sources such as church and spiritual counseling is a MUST- it changes

- lives.
- (29) We need more Christian services and classes.
 - (30) More money and effort should be put into community alternatives to incarceration and restorative justice.
 - (31) Unless change occurs within the individual while incarcerated, it is unlikely that the inmate will succeed on the outside. Therefore, faith-based programs with emphasis on life skill related needs are imperative. Unfortunately, they are usually underfunded while other seemingly important programs gobble up monies and are often ineffective.
 - (32) More Biblico studies for those who want to hear The Word About Jesus.
 - (33) Those in prison should be encouraged to become a Christian and be disciplined by strong Christians while in prison and out of prison because only a personal relationship with Jesus Christ will change a person's heart and, as a result give that person moral convictions about living a holy life.
 - (34) Prisoners should have more access to religious and educational services.
 - (35) The inmates can use more knowledge about God in they life to stay free from the world system of living. If you filled that prison up with God based groups and make them mandatory and the word got out you might fine that there is nothing cool about going to prison anymore. It's all church in there and you got to go. Teach them right from wrong in there. Teach them how to respect one another and teach them how to love each other. That revolving door will close.
 - (36) TDCJ needs to make more effort to offer effective life skills programs such as NewLife Behavior Ministries and Christians Against Substance Abuse. Former inmates who have successfully reentered society for 5 years or more should be allowed to serve as instructors of such curriculum.
 - (37) System does not recognize the power of God to change a person's life. See I CO 6:11.
 - (38) Accommodate more religious habits/rituals.
 - (39) Religious programs are extremely important for both participating and non-participating offenders. A sense of focus, or re-focus is attained by almost all offenders, who are not otherwise occupying themselves with disruptive activity. Education is a crucial tool for offender management, as it provides something 'to lose', as a deterrent to misbehavior. Combine religious and educational programs to create a program to assist those young people, who are on the line and about to commit crimes resulting in their incarceration. Treating the person and offering more alternatives to the younger, non-violent offenders is crucial in slowing the incarceration rate.
 - (40) Without changing an individuals heart (spiritual condition), it is impossible to achieve a lasting change in that person. Treatment of man's spirit is required for permanent rehabilitation.
 - (41) Needs more spiritual- based dorms.
 - (42) Making the Church a part of the prison system could be our answer.
 - (43) In most areas I am not informed sufficiently and would leave those areas to those most qualified. From personal experience I know that Christian teaching and personal worship experience has helped many.
 - (44) I think there should be more opportunity time available for outside, non affiliated Christian groups to interact with inmates by services and bible instruction.
 - (45) I have not been in the Texas criminal system but I do know that more money should be spent on treatment and religious activities.
 - (46) I feel that before we can help these individuals we first have to grasp the problems we have

in society in a realistic and spiritual manner that forces some of these into this situation. After which allow the opportunity for faith based groups if requested to minister to these individuals how to gain the authority over their problems through a relationship with God.

- (47) I believe the only real change in a person's way of life, thinking, and habits can be achieved through a true relationship with God and education.
- (48) Each person in prison, no matter what they did to get there, is a SOUL in God's eyes. Jesus died on that cross for them just as He did for you and me. And it could be Me or YOU in prison instead of them. I sincerely believe that each one of them deserves a chance to start over and do good out here. God forgives us and we should forgive them. they need housing, jobs, churches, etc. and someone to care and help them get started again. So far we have helped 6 of them upon their release. And they have done GREAT. We are very PROUD of them and their accomplishments. They just need to know that somebody CARES.
- (49) Give more opportunities to grow Spiritually!!
- (50) Rehab, education, religious, and work opportunities in prisons are of the most value to a prisoner.
- (51) Educational books, and religious books of many varieties should be available.
- (52) When a prisoner is up for parole, I think that person should be able to talk to someone about their reason for being in prison. The person they need to talk to will be a man of GOD. Pastors

- People need to be educated. Offer incentives for prisoners as they complete more educational programs. Teach courses on non-violence. Let them read Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Thoreau. Build them back up instead of tearing them down even more. I don't like the idea of using reform programs that are based on religious or militaristic values and ideals.
- It's a shame that such a great state and nation as a whole still have such a high incidence of violent crime and general apathy shown towards other people. I'd say that most crimes against people and property show a lack of respect for other people's way of life and belongings. I believe the best way to begin a gradual but permanent change in this attitude is to not only improve education for youths and already-incarcerated prisoners, but also to promote positive values through strong families. I don't believe that heavy-handed religious teachings, nor denying access to violent media or entertainment, promotes values very well at all. These tend to cause rifts in societal structures and make a small number of people think they know what's best for the majority they don't truly understand. Encouragement of strong family values--togetherness, faithfulness and fidelity, respect for the elderly, emphasis on education and self-betterment, respect and nurturing of children, honesty, and compassion for your neighbors--is sadly dwindling from my generation and the next one to come. We have to reverse this to see a positive growth in our communities. -Vijay S. | polarber1@hotmail.com
- Education is needed, Windham is not. Faith-based programs that have spirituality and cognitive basis work- secular programs do not have near the effectiveness.
- Get rid of faith-based approaches.

SYSTEMIC RACIAL BIAS

- (1) Ultimately, I support attempts to reform the Texas Criminal Justice System and make it more humane and fair. However, I don't think that reforms are going to end the racial and class injustices inherent in the Criminal Justice System. We need to move completely away from incarceration towards Transformative Justice.
- (2) Too many people, especially minorities, in prison. Racism exists in prison and outside.
- (3) This country has a serious problem in the area of criminal justice...all the way from our legal system to our huge incarceration rate. If we don't make some serious efforts to educate, support and work on solutions we are all going to suffer. The system appears to have some institutional racism going on with 80% plus being young minority men that are incarcerated. It is time for everyone that is concerned about social justice to get involved in whatever way they can. We are very naive if we think that just locking 'our problems' up and not taking any substantial efforts toward finding out the 'why's' behind what got them there in the first place. This naivety is going to cost us all eventually....just watch the evening news to see this, or better yet drive through our inner cities and see the results of our neglect.
- (4) There is a lot to do as far as improving the Texas Criminal Justice System. There are still a disproportionate number of Black people going to prison.
- (5) There is racism at all levels and the system must be overhauled at once.
- (6) The Texas Criminal Justice system is racially biased. I hope this can be fixed with more effort to educate the police officers and legal justice personnel to be less racist.
- (7) The Texas Criminal Justice system is one of the most unfair justice systems in the United States. The system is very racially motivated. How is it most of the prisons and jails in Texas are filled with more Blacks, Hispanics and people of color vs. whites? How is it a white woman can kill all five of her children and get 20 years when I know some inmates who are locked up for 20 years for drug dealing? sentencing should be fair. It needs an overhaul.
- (8) The media shows a disproportionately amount of people of color incarcerated. This obviously raises the question on racist practices in the Texas Criminal Justice system.
- (9) Stop racial profiling. Pay cops better so they will not have to live out their inferiority complex by brutalizing people.
- (10) It is a very racist system in this southern state.
- (11) Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to be convicted of felonies, an obvious social injustice that qualifies as de facto racism.
- (12) Like the public school system, the criminal justice system is broken. If you are of color or have no money you go to jail.
- (13) Traffic stop skills should be worked on until whites and blacks have equal rates of drugs found (whites are getting off easy, blacks not).
- (14) Incarcerating non-violent/non-sex offender criminals leads to racial discrepancies that are tantamount to racial discrimination. Drugs that are typically used by lower class or minority populations are given stiffer penalties and end up in jail more.
- (15) Stop locking up so many blacks and Hispanics!

INDIGENT DEFENSE, PUBLIC DEFENDERS, AND OTHER JUSTICE ISSUES

- (1) The plea mill system needs revamping, prosecutors need to prove a case occasionally instead of starting at the top and going down until they find something a person will plead to in order to be done with it. Texas needs competent and concerned public defenders; the indigent defense system is shameful. more accountability in enforcement and prosecution as concerns rules of evidence, etc. put the 4th 5th and 6th amendments back in, when did we repeal them anyway? the criminal justice system is broken beyond belief, and probably beyond repair, but some of these things would be a start.
- (2) Public defender could be one answer for many complaints about inadequate representation.
- (3) There can be no justice as long as money is the determining factor in whether you get justice or not. Justice should not be bought. But when you get a court appointed attorney that spends 30 minutes on your case before trial this is not justice.
- (4) More money should be spent on proper representation of criminals in court hearings.
- (5) FAR too many are in prison due to the fact they had little or no 'real' representation in the criminal courts in the first place. Some were traded out for cases by the DA's and are serving ridiculous sentences for a crime that was non-violent and yet the parole board refuses to allow them a chance.
- (6) In Texas the TDCJ is a self perpetuating business as is the district attys system unchecked by a public defender.
- (7) It is not a fair system as it appears that those who have money spend less time for the same crime.
- (8) I personally think that we do not have justice in this state. A person is guilty until proven innocent (if you have enough money to do that).
- (9) We need more funding for public defender offices, instead of the appointed system which is a sham!
- (10) If we are going to incarcerate people, then they should be provided with good legal counsel.
- (11) I recommend that more time is put into the trial system than anything. People go to jail for crimes they didn't commit and spend there life behind bars only to be free later. I was once told it was all about money but why should those who can't afford it be thrown to the wolves and those who are guilty buy there freedom. God has the final say so in that matter and one day justice will truly be blind. People's lives are worth something and I don't think the TDCJ gives a damn about it or the truth. I have seen it in action and I follow cases on my own and I have seen first hand what kind of justice a poor person gets. Justice in Texas is not fair and I see it will never be.
- (12) I feel that with the great number of prisons that have been built in Texas in the last 10 years some folks in the Justice system are getting kickbacks for sending so many innocent persons to prison. In Texas practically everyone committed for a crime are ask to plea out by legal council and especially those folks with court appointed attorneys. A lot of the Court appointed attorneys are incompetent! Recommendation: That the courts make sure that when a defendant has a court appointed attorney that he has some knowledge of the crime and that he specialize in that field. Monitor the court appointed attorneys billing make sure he is meeting with his client and reading his file and not just make any decision for his client review his visits to jail and prisons to see if billing matches. I have friends and family who work in the legal arena and have heard stories. Make sure that the attorneys are

not misleading their clients and selling them out to the government. In the last 10 years there has been a lot of corruption in the Judicial system. The court rooms need to be monitored by advocates & volunteers to make sure that defendants are being fairly represented and that they have professional and adequate translations and that they are being given a fair PSI scoring and sentence. Because I feel that the courts just us a standard procedure. This winter I witnessed a lot of discrepancies by the legal council in a federal courtroom in Southern Texas I was shocked. I was glad the Judge was fair and balanced.

- (13) There should be just as much money put into the public defender's office as the district attorney's office.
- (14) I became involved in the TCJ system after the incarceration of a loved one. Since then my idea of 'If you do the crime, you do the time', has greatly changed. I realize now how many people are in jail because of lawyers who really don't care about their client, D.A.'s who are more interested in closing a case as fast as possibly, and judges to overwhelmed to really look at cases as 'individuals'.

DEATH PENALTY REFORM (*Note: TCJC does not work on these issues, but survey respondents feel the following:*)

- (1) The death penalty should be taken off the books. There are too many mistakes.
- (2) Death penalty should be abolished.
- (3) There were no questions about death row, which I feel was deficient in a state that executes by far the most criminals each year. While the Texas public does not share my view of ridding ourselves of this awful and immoral system, we should still seek reform. Death row inmates are a special case in their treatment, and the Commission should evaluate how the Dept of Criminal Justice is currently handling that aspect in detail.
- (4) TDCJ should address living conditions for prisoners on death row.
- (5) Stop the death penalty.
- (6) The Texas Criminal Justice System is a Killing Machine. They are quick to put innocent parties to death or on Death Row, for crimes that are committed by someone else due to the Law of Parties and that is unjust. That law itself should be removed from legislature or revised to the extent that it does not punish the innocent bystanders.
- (7) The death penalty should be abolished.
- (8) The death penalty should be abolished immediately and permanently.
- (9) The death penalty is wrong.
- (10) The death penalty is a waste of time and legal resources.
- (11) Replace the death penalty with solitary confinement. Costs less.
- (12) Rather than wasting money incarcerating criminals, executing felons rather than keeping them on death row would save the state thousands of tax dollars.
- (13) I have a real problem with death row inmates sitting for years at the tax payer's expense!
- (14) People on death row need to be able to communicate with other prisoners. They need some connection to the outside world - through TV at least. They need to be able to read, work and attend religious services. They need to be able to do craft and art projects. They need to be able to earn money to pay restitution to those they have harmed. They need visits from family and friends. Keeping them isolated is making them insane. They need

- their thermal underwear in winter. And fans in the summer.
- (15) Offenders on and off of death row need to work and be paid so that they can make restitution to those they have harmed. They need to be able to communicate with other prisoners unless they are truly dangerous. The mentally ill need more treatment. The total isolation is making them crazy. There should be more and better health care. They need access to TV. They should be able to read what they want. There should be more offender/victim mediation. Those on death row need to attend religious services.
 - (16) Get rid of the death penalty.
 - (17) Something is wrong when almost everyone in death row is black or brown. We should have a moratorium on the death penalty.
 - (18) I do not believe in the death penalty.
 - (19) I do not agree with the death penalty and think it should be abolished.
 - (20) I am against the death penalty.
 - (21) I deal only with a friend on Texas Death Row. I find that those conditions seem far worse than those for the general population. I believe that if offenders on Death Row have shown themselves to be compliant and non-confrontational, they should be afforded privileges such as extra recreational time or visitation time.
 - (22) Re death penalty: every Texan, of any income and race, deserves a high quality, competent defender in a capital case.
 - (23) I have seen studies that have found that it is cheaper to house convicts for life imprisonment than to execute them. If this is indeed true, wouldn't it make sense to commute all death sentences to life without parole? I mean, God kills them for free, can't we just wait a few years?
 - (24) I have little experience in dealing with the Criminal Justice System, but (whether or not it will prove to be helpful here) I must express my strong opposition to the death penalty. I feel that a lifetime of imprisonment with the possibility of treatment would be a much better alternative.
 - (25) I believe that you need to take away the death penalty.
 - (26) Abolish the death penalty.
 - (27) Being that I have a loved one on death row... I feel it is a need to address concerns in this area. I feel that visitation should be held different. I believe that with all things good behavior should be rewarded. Maybe a possible contact visit once every six months for good behavior. They should be allowed to have some sort of crafts and allowed to fellowship together for religious purposes. Each day that they sit with idle hands and minds gives more problems than those solved. Some have been released from death row into general population and even from prison. These men need to be able to have some sort of social skills. It was proven that on death row when they were able to move around, they had less problems than those in general population. These men need to be productive and out of the 23/7 lockup format that they currently reside in.
 - (28) End the Death penalty.
 - (29) The state's record of executions is abysmal, shameful, and fiscally irresponsible.
 - (30) State sponsored execution is costly, inhumane and barbaric - more suited for the 18th century than the 21st.
 - (31) I'm ashamed that our state executes so many people...I abhor the rising numbers and feel that a lengthy moratorium is necessary to re-evaluate the judiciousness of its application.
 - (32) I am ashamed that my state leads the nation in the number of executions per year. I see little to no empirical evidence linking capital punishment to lowering crime.

- (33) No capital punishment, please.
- (34) I know little about the prisons in Texas, all friends/relatives have been incarcerated in other states. However the rate of capitol punishment is my biggest concern feeling it is way too high... do not know if there is any relation between this survey and that issue.

- Liberal application of the death penalty is needed for violent criminals.
- More death sentences (don't let them sit on death row for along time) one week only to tell family good bye.
- Rather than wasting money incarcerating criminals, executing felons rather than keeping them on death row would save the state thousands of tax dollars.
- If you know someone is guilty (more than 2 eye witnesses plus evidence) and it is a violent/sexual crime, just kill them immediately. Don't waste tax payer dollars on death row inmates. When convicted, ignore appeals, take them directly to a room and give them a lethal injection.
- If you are really concerned with money allocation, why do we still have the death penalty? Let's make our prisoners work for us--it will help Texas as it will help them get ready for life in the world again.
- I think the amount of money spent on keeping prisoners on death row while they go through years of appeals is ridiculous, particularly in cases where it is absolutely certain the person committed the crime/murder.
- Death penalty for murderers and child molesters.
- START EXECUTING RAPISTS AND MURDERERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

SENTENCING ISSUES AND INIQUITIES

- (1) Most of the incarcerated will return to society, and yet those programs that will help them adjust are cut. I understand that politically you must be 'tough on crime.' However, we need to look at the long run...the future in preventing recidivism and first-time entry into prison...the impact on their children, etc. I do not propose the sudden legalization of any crimes; I don't think that solves anything. I do think that we should review sentencing guidelines for a little bit of consistency (I read in the paper a guy robs a store and gets 25 years, another murders a man and gets 10 years--both terrible things...but does that make sense--even considering past criminal activity?)
- (2) Mandatory sentences for non-violent offenses is too severe.
- (3) You all need to reevaluate this system of how much time a person is going to get for the crime that they are committing. What is this that a person that is caught with drugs is given more time in jail then a person who has killed or raped someone. Those are the people that you all are letting out on parole early and are giving them less time in jail. You all should give them life in prison and I don't mean 20 years, but 99 years. I mean don't get me wrong, but we also need to put the drug dealers in jail and be harsh but you are letting the murders get away. Yes that is a long time but they decided to commit that crime and they should be punished for taking another life away or for raping an innocent victim. punishment for

similar crimes should be the same. We need to enforce the laws we currently have on the books and stiffen some penalties. Example Driving without insurance is a 200.00 fine. Why should a person pay \$800 a year plus for insurance when he can get slapped with a simple fine. Fine should be more than the cost of insurance.

- (4) Get serious about electing good appeals court judges...i.e. - put up some good money to help elect someone to the bench other than ex-prosecutors and fascists. you can begin with the 1st Court of Appeals.
- (5) Improve the court handling system. It took 5 months to locate and bring to court the man responsible for hitting my car and fleeing the scene. Then the actual court case never took place, because the prosecutor gave me the wrong court room number to appear in. I don't know what happened with the case, but I was never able to get my restitution.
- (6) Everyone make a mistake, we have laws that are too strict on dwi.
- (7) After my son's false arrest, I realize there has to be some judicial accountability laws that are upheld strongly! I have learned first hand why so many innocent people are convicted. The plea bargain system in Texas is way out of control! Yes my son was one of the luckiest guys in the state of Texas, three weeks before his trial thank god for two girls who help capture the real perpetrator. Our story is long and I am willing to share it with whom-ever. If my son would have taken deferred adjudication, the state of Texas would have another innocent young man registered as a sex-offender. If the PD and detective would have thoroughly investigated my son they would of have found out he was nowhere near that college town and actually still living in his home town. My son was in Bryan/CS for only four weeks when this happened, he was strictly identified from a dl photo line-up. It cost us 30grand and his first year in college on top of that. He immediately left the area and moved back home with us after his arrest, to Palacios, the incident continued on after he left, same description of the suspect, yet the police lied and aired my son's name again saying he did not fit the description. Deferred adjudication is way out of control! It is suppose to give a person a second chance! It is a non-conviction! What happens to people who are falsely accuse and can't hire a highly qualified attorney and private investigator? They go to jail and/or coerced into taking a plea bargain. I have so much to say about the Texas criminal justice system, I realize this is a survey, but I am willing to talk to anyone if need be. I will shorten this as of now. My apologies. Beverly Blaha Lanfear, blanfear@wcnet.net 361-972-2421
- (8) Personally, I think they should do away with plea bargains. There are too many loop holes that offenders are able to get through.
- (9) Judges letting major offenses walk then turn around and slap a minor conviction with a HUGE sentence. It happens all of the state, and nothing is done about it. That is NOT justice.
- (10) The system of mandatory crimes is unworkable. The percentage of our population behind bars is unacceptable. As a society, we can not afford the financial and social strain that this is causing. This is clearly a case of corruption; the corporations behind the running of prisons are influencing lawmakers to make decisions that benefit them but are detrimental to society.
- (11) The system does not address front-end decision making enough. For example, a person who is incarcerated at the time of case disposition (not on bail), is more likely to receive a sentence that includes incarceration.
- (12) The DA's should not allow misdemeanor offenses be enhanced to a felony, just to excuse the county from their responsibility of community justice.

- (13) When sexual predators get less time than drug buyers or dealers, society's priorities are wrong. Crimes against people are always more serious than crimes against property (I put drug issues in this category).
- (14) There are non-violent sex offenders that should have the same rights as drug abusers. The majority of these are incidents within a family and the only closure is rebuilding by rebuilding trust between all injured parties. At a recent CURE meeting a top parole official stated that recidivism rates for sex offenders under state supervision is less than 3%. Sex offender does not mean child rapist. Do not let your dislike of these people cloud your good judgment. TX could be a national leader if we are bold enough to take the proper steps. Taking away everything, even the hope of a better future, is not good policy. I would like to testify on behalf of sex offenders. Can that be arranged?
- (15) I know that sex offenders routinely get probation instead of incarceration because 'there's not enough room in prison' and it's too hard to prosecute them. The whole thing is a mess.
- (16) Re-evaluate bond/bail system for poor young men and women accused of drug related crimes.
- (17) Many convicted of felonies fall victim to an unjust classification system that punishes drug-related crimes more seriously than child molestation and rape.
- (18) Overall, I feel that the emphasis in the system has been misplaced and short-sighted by simply locking up offenders and 'forgetting' about them as if this was a disposable part of our society. The incarceration of offenders has become an inefficient cycle of counter productiveness in the state of Texas. Finding solutions by breaking that cycle and letting the punishment fit the crime rather than casting the widest net to penalize all offenders in the most extreme ways would seem to me to be a better way of keeping the public truly safe. These types of solutions will only be reached by changing not only life behind bars, but by addressing unbalanced sentencing guidelines and weaknesses in our penal code such as 7.02(b), which has been used by state prosecutors to strongly penalize those who are merely present and/or negligent when an offense occurs.
- (19) Non-violent offenders are given much longer prisons sentences.
- (20) Distribution of drugs should be dealt with more harshly than possession, even if the person is in possession of a large amount of drugs. To say someone has the 'intent to sell' just based on the amount of drugs in their possession is ridiculous.
- (21) My husband and I are both over pensionable age and live permanently in the UK as we are UK citizens. The biggest difference that we note between the Texas Justice System and the UK System is that length of sentence is decided by a jury and would depend upon the prejudices within that group of people. In the UK the length of sentence is decided by a Judge who would consider the age and circumstances of the crime within guidelines previously decided by the law society. In Texas it seems that this causes an inhuman attitude to incarceration. For example, a person who commits a crime at 16 years old is a totally different person at 26 years old, but may have been given a sentence of 30 years or more before coming up for parole which still may not be given for several years.
- (22) Children, those under 18, at the time of the crime should never be tried as adults for all the reasons spelled out in *Roper v Simmons*.
- (23) Houston Crime Labs are not very good and strongly need to be improved so wrongly convicted persons don't go to jail on false pretenses.
- (24) I think that there should be a more regulated way of sentencing these inmates. I have a brother that has recently been sentenced to eight years for being the driver of a get away car in an aggravated robbery, while being ignorant to the fact that there was a weapon drawn.

I've heard of cases of sexual rapists or sexual offenders going in for only two years, which is worse in my opinion than driving a get away car. The sentencing and placing of inmates should be more regulated and suitable for the crime. My brother was also placed in maximum security with murderers and rapists for what he did.

- (25) I think that people who get DWI's should be dealt with in a more harsh way.
- (26) I think that non-violent, non-sexual offenses should not be treated as harshly as they have been.
- (27) DWI related offenses should not be addressed so aggressively. People make mistakes unintentionally, and they do not necessarily need to be treated like those who intentionally broke the law (i.e. intoxicated assault with a vehicle should not be considered an aggravated charge). TDCJ should work with TxDOT to offer more public transportation options to combat the DWI problem.
- (28) I would like to see harsher penalties for sex offenders and domestic abuse. There are no excuses for these crimes.
- (29) I think there should be harsher punishment for repeating offenders.
- (30) Emphasis should be on a review of our current laws - typically increasing penalties does not work well.
- (31) Tougher penalties and more attention paid to assault. More concern by cops to find violent assault and DWI perpetrators, less concern for drug busts. Less attention paid to drug-related crimes that don't involve assault, DUI, murder, or robbery. Abolish the seat belt law and the funds spent on the 'Click it or Ticket' campaign.
- (32) I believe that many individuals are currently incarcerated for making a serious mistake in their young life. Everyone sometimes does stupid things but teenagers seem to excel at impulsive behavior that defies adult understanding. Some of their stunts go too far causing injury and death. The latest Australian science says their brains are physically unable to control some of these impulses until they're 25 years old. Yet the law says they are responsible adults at 18. Should we be giving 20 something offenders a break? No, not a break, but not long prison sentences either.
- (33) Make petty crimes such as POM, DWLS, Fail to ID; etc class 'C' punishable by fine and/or confinement only. These type cases drain probation resources that could be better spent on serious offenders.
- (34) There needs to be truth in sentencing throughout the system not just for State Jail Felons when incarcerated.
- (35) Sex offenders should not be such a broad category. A guy that rapes a child is a sex offender. A couple who have consensual sex under age and mommy and daddy don't like it and send the boy to jail is not a sex offender.
- (36) Williamson County and others like them must STOP trying to send everyone to prison for the maximum amount of time so they can get re elected or move up in government. We need some creative judges!!
- (37) We should de-criminalize many activities or at the least establish degrees of seriousness from misdemeanor to felony. As to felony we should distinguish between violent and non-violent.

PRISON PRIVATIZATION

- (1) The prison industry always seeks to expand. Texas should assume responsibility for its prisons--not depend on private prisons which exist to make a profit.
- (2) Stop allowing corporations to use prisoners as super cheap labor. The most important time for a prisoner is when they are set free. The time in jail should be spent preparing for that day.
- (3) Stop State-Corporate profiteering on prisons.
- (4) Building Prisons is BIG BUSINESS in Texas. As Texans and Responsible Citizens, we need to address prison reform, or just let them build a Barbed Wire fence around Texas.
- (5) There is some balance required so that prisons do not turn into forced labor camps.
- (6) I disagree with the privatization of prisons, where any costs saved to the public come at the expense of personnel and prisoners and enrich the pockets of CEOs of these companies.
- (7) I believe that Criminal Justice and Prison facilities should be under the most intense scrutiny. I feel that there should be no monetary incentive involved with the Criminal Justice System. I feel that private firms should be removed from the 'prison business.'
- (8) Policy makers need to be removed from the benefits of building more prisons. Too many people in the state of Texas profit off of individuals being sent to prison.
- (9) The temptation to try to turn prison labor into a profit center should be resisted. It is unfair to free-world workers.
- (10) Curb or elimination of private prisons or at least greater training and supervision of any private prisons.
- (11) Prisons should not become sources of slave labor for corporations -- this is unfair to workers both in and out of prison, and the taxpayer bears the unfair burden of the cost of incarceration. we need more treatment programs for mentally ill inmates.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- (1) TDCJ has always been geared toward spending their money on prisons and this is based on the public's perception about crime and prisons. The general public has no idea what the difference is between probation and parole or what either agency does. The solution to spending is to educate the public about these agencies, what they do and how they work. If this was done, then the public might be more willing to vote and pressure their congressmen for spending on probation, instead of prisons.
- (2) Clarify what specific employees of this system do.
- (3) One thing I feel very strongly about that I think would be helpful might be to get info on specific attitudes towards non-violent drug offenders vs. other convicts. I'm much more inclined to support legislation that changes laws to get this group more treatment.
- (4) Work must be done to bring home those who have transgressed the rules and mores of society. Public education is imperative if we are to successfully reintegrate these folks.

- (5) More awareness to the community about the conditions affecting the incarcerated.
- (6) Why am I bombarded by commercials about useless products and American Idol instead of City Council events, voting, criminal justice programs. I mean ask FOX for a weekend like on a national or state holiday for a telethon. If PBS can do it, why aren't state programs. In general law enforcement and criminal justice, is not vocal enough about changes, status, asking for help, information. Instead we allow the news and the commercial sector to portray this world as scary, a prison system, and constantly under attack by criminals, and cops alike. Why do you think cops and jails have a bad rap? Because the general populous has no clue about either. Then the next thing you see is people on TV, on the loose, in your area, with sex offenders in our schools, cops shooting a man with a cell phone, bad cops, silly snippets of interviews where state officials look foolish, cops look brutish. Actually come to think of it COPS the show was not all that bad. It's better glamorization of sex, drugs, and violence than most of what's out there because it seems to be a better picture. In fact my respect and honor grew towards the officers and others involved in most of the shows, and in general for what they had to deal with, and helped me understand what really happens in some situations. Why not more on TV and the Internet? Don't show tacky commercials with a man in a sea of cops without a seatbelt on. Show a video of a crash or testament of a family member of a person who died without one on. It's the law. Pffff. Its physics and biochemistry. Educate by offering truth and positive reinforcement rather than judgment and indignation. Heck, call every news station every week to ask for interviews with local officers and employees of the justice system, even prisoners! Until they let you on TV! My point is I guess that it should be run more like a business model rather than an institution that no one hears about or interacts with unless it's negative. I think that is a HUGE reason why most people ignore, and underfund the system. I can't remember the last time I saw the face of a smiling officer or judge or employee of the criminal system. Or got a flyer in the mail, a note on the door or a hello from one on the street. Why? I think by combining approaches to rehabilitation and treatment in institutions as correcting and preventing behavioral diseases that are both predisposed and heavily environmentally infused, with an increase of media and life influence of a POSITIVE image for the CJ system, and a business type model, where funds, participation and cooperation are actively pursued through all lines of communication at all levels including, benefits, job placement (I have never seen a commercial or been notified of any information about becoming a member of the CJ system, cop or other employees, but I see commercials for NOMORENT.COM, I mean please, get the word out!), PR, donations, fund raisers, picnics, community leadership, etc. etc. etc. That's all I can muster at this time.
- (7) I having been exposed to some of the intricacies of its workings, whether volunteer, or personally, I would say there are some positive aspects as to progress and yet there is much more work to do, and an even greater need for community education and awareness programs.
- (8) People don't understand the prison system unless you've been involved in it. PEOPLE NEED EDUCATING. Not everyone in prison is an ax murder. There are some great people in prison who made stupid mistakes.
- (9) There is much research showing that coercive punishment is not effective. Law and policy makers need to be educated on the effective methods of rehabilitation and correction.
- (10) If the general public had an accurate picture of the realities of the prison experience, in all its brutality and waste of human and economic resources, the Legislature might feel greater pressure to fund a real system. Then again, maybe not - most people have a good idea of

what schools are like, but the Legislature doesn't have much to be proud of there either.

- (11) The average person needs to have a macro picture of the TDCJ budget as compared to what the state spends on public education. Very inverse and morally not right.

RESEARCH

- (1) There needs to be follow up on the ex-offenders who do not recidivate and statistics taken on the number who do not return to incarceration. Legislators should take a closer look at the state jails and their administration, i.e. correctional officer's character and pay scale, medical conditions, air conditioning in educational buildings, wardens that are assigned to particular units, the education that is offered and that is not offered. Ultimately, I feel we need to ask if all that can be done to prevent recidivism is being done and whether the state jail, as well as I.D. units are cost effective and designed to prevent criminal activity in the future.
- (2) Studies should be commissioned to demonstrate just how effective treatment is compared to just retributive incarceration.
- (3) I think TCJ should report and the cost of execution per inmate. Then evaluate if, on an economic basis, it isn't better to sentence people to life in prison without any chance of parole.
- (4) It would be nice for research to be conducted as to the correlation between inmates who become involved in school, those who become involved with work, and those who do neither. How is school conducted and promoted in prison?
- (5) Fund or research programs that reduce the overall rate of crime for the entire population.

VICTIM ISSUES

- (1) Not enough time is spent on the victims of crime, especially violent crime. They are the forgotten in the system, and they should be the focus. Instead they are pushed to the fringes, kept out of courtrooms, and generally suffer while the offenders finish their sentences never having made up for the financial and emotional damage they have done.
- (2) Needs to inform victim a lot quicker of transferred inmates.
- (3) I would like to see more rights for victims and less rights for offenders.
- (4) I greatly appreciate that I am regularly informed about the guy who attacked me through victim services.
- (5) Victims of sex-offenders (especially children) should be able to have a 10 year protective order against the perpetrator instead of just 2 years. My daughter's molester will be off of the protective order when my daughter is only 12. This is a critical age for a child (puberty) and they needn't be exposed to the person who made their childhood hell. The molester fought the protective order in the first place, even though he was not a family member. It is highly important that he not be allowed to contact his victim though the TCJ will allow him to do so in one year. The victim was 5 years old when he began molesting her. He is currently in his 20's. Protect the victim!!!!!!!!!!!! - not the criminal!!!!!!!!!!!!

DRUG REFORM

- (1) The amount of money spent for incarcerating people with minimal amounts of illegal substances is absurd. I was arrested with less than 1/2 oz. of marijuana and am currently going through the extremely inefficient system. I am not a violent person and I was not arrested operating a motor vehicle, I was not even intoxicated. I do not feel that I am a menace to society. In fact, I am an upstanding citizen with a college degree from the University of Texas. I have been working to pay my way through college and will graduate tomorrow, May 19th, with honors, and yet I am a convicted criminal.
- (2) We need more drug treatment options for those convicted of crimes in Texas. We are too limited as to what we can do with those who want and need treatment, both in and out of prison.
- (3) I don't do drugs. I don't advocate drug use, and wouldn't condone them being used by family members, but do feels it's unfortunate that we spend so much money incarcerating people for using 'dangerous drugs'. I would be a felon if I was caught with pounds of marijuana, but it would be ok if I were caught with 5 cases of Tito's vodka. It's only dangerous if you allow it to be.
- (4) Non-violent, non-sexual offenders (recreational drug users especially) should be put in treatment proportionate to their level of dependency on a drug (repeat offenders of stronger drugs like heroin and cocaine. these should be watched and helped out of their addiction, not punished.
- (5) It not only costs a lot of money to incarcerate low level drug offenders, the rest of the family is often thrust further into a spiral of poverty and public assistance that costs the tax payers even more money. I would rather see them decriminalize possession of marijuana and tax it to death - then take that tax money to fund more drug treatment programs and education. We waste too much money on chasing pot users and it doesn't stop the usage.
- (6) I wish that more money would be allocated to drug diversion courts, specifically for more resources...like job placement, education.
- (7) First-time, non-violent, drug offenders should be offered drug treatment and treatment for problems that LEAD to drug use and abuse. They should then be subjected to drug testing through the probation system, and then have their records expunged after a year or so. This would reserve beds for real criminals, and not forever ruin the lives of those who made a mistake.
- (8) The current CJ system in Texas is NOT working. Major and perhaps unpopular but proven successful changes need to be made immediately. For example decriminalizing drug usage and treating it as an illness needing treatment rather than a crime needing punishment would free up resources needed to enforce the punishment of violent felons. At the same time it might intervene in the lives of drug users and keep them from progressing into a life of crime.
- (9) As a taxpayer, I'm disgusted with how much money we spend in Texas to incarcerate non-violent drug offenders – especially since these offenders, instead of getting treatment, STILL have access to drugs inside prison walls. Programs to offer treatment have been successful in other states, saving taxpayers a great deal of money and getting people the treatment they need.
- (10) Our society's problems that arise from drug abuse are the result of misguided policies at the

national level. Until we as a nation face the reality that drug use cannot be eradicated any more than alcohol use could be eliminated during Prohibition, we are going to spend an inordinate percentage of criminal justice funding putting folks behind bars. Unfortunately, under the current legal system, the Texas Criminal Justice system has few options. The only rational approach, in my opinion, is to place as many non-violent drug users (especially recreational users) on probation or in treatment programs as possible.

- (11) Drug use related crimes should not require incarceration. Treatment and counseling would be a far better and cheaper way of doing things.
- (12) We need more Drug Courts they work, save money, stops recidivism.
- (13) Treatment rather than punitive aspects should be enhanced. Drug Courts and problem solving courts should be promoted.
- (14) I believe that people should not be put in jail solely because of drug use, because they are only hurting themselves and shouldn't be considered a threat to society. They should instead be put in treatment programs and helped back into society.
- (15) Drug offenders are better served by treatment.
- (16) The drug 'war' should be abandoned with the state giving serious consideration to the decriminalization of lesser drugs (marihuana) and greater emphasis on drug treatment.
- (17) Too much space taken up by non-violent offenders with drug use issues that are better addressed through treatment/change in laws.
- (18) Non-violent drug offenses should not be subject to incarceration--only treatment.
- (19) I believe rational drug policy is the best route to effective prison reform. Addiction to alcohol and other drugs is a physiological disease, like epilepsy or cancer, with physiological causes that are beginning to be understood and can be treated by conventional medicine. Relegating addicts to the criminal justice system overburdens it and reduces the effectiveness with which it can incarcerate and rehabilitate criminals who are dangerous to life and/or property.
- (20) The practice of punishing drug offenders with prison time is clearly ineffective and therefore a waste of tax dollars. Many inmates are able to find access to drugs in prison, others detox without proper medical supervision. Neither situation is likely to lead to a successful recovery. Individuals who have a substance abuse problem need access to treatment.
- (21) The federal and state drug laws have been repeatedly been shown to be ineffective. Much of the money spent on interdiction, prosecution, and incarceration would be better spent on treatment, and education.
- (22) More focus should be brought to non-violent offenders. Drug offenders can be rehabilitated in a drug-treatment program (not in a prison). Putting these offenders (often young) in prison gives them access to names & numbers of people who sells drugs on the outside; when they get out, they know where to go to buy drugs. They end up back in prison with a longer sentence.
- (23) Drug users should be sent to treatment centers, not prison.
- (24) Non-violent drug offenders should not be sent to prison unless they have been convicted of some kind of other crime in the past. We need treatment. The prisons are clogged with non-violent drug offenders who, for the benefit of society and the justice system, should be put on probation and given mandatory treatment programs. These people are harming no one but themselves. Prison is not the place for them.
- (25) Non-violent drug offenders should not be incarcerated. This is a waste of money. More money should be spent on rehabilitation.

- (26) People convicted of possession or selling drugs to fund their own drug habit should be put into a comprehensive drug treatment program that includes group and private therapy, AA, NA or other such programs. If applicable they should have parenting classes, anger management, job training, and other programs that help them to become productive citizens.
- (27) As far as non-violent, drug offenders, there should be more treatment centers for them to go to rather than prisons.
- (28) It is my belief that incarcerating non-violent offenders (where I consider any sexual crime such as rape or child molestation as violent) is a misuse of funds as they are for the most part not a threat to society. It is better to fine drug users or force them into therapy.
- (29) I think that non-violent drug offenses should not be looked at as a crime against the state. I feel the state has no right to say what an individual can do to him/herself. Once that individual affects another, then the state should step in. I am not saying that drug abuse is not a problem in the state of Texas, but I do not feel that prisons do any good to combat this problem. To address this problem, treatment is a better method.
- (30) I firmly believe that we need more rehabilitation rather than incarceration for non-violent drug offenses. These people need help, which they will not receive in prison. We would actually save money if we would get drug users treatment instead of locking-up them up in prison time after time.
- (31) I don't believe in the incarceration of non-violent drug offenders, particularly marijuana offenders. Distributing however connotes the occasional requirement for violence (since there is no lawful protection they have to protect themselves) so that is a different story. I believe in therapy and rehabilitation over punishment and retribution. I believe that it is a waste of time and money to incarcerate a non-violent drug offender who is a minimum risk to society. Being a risk to themselves is not a viable reason to jail them. I'm more afraid of the irrational, dangerous behavior of a drunkard than a stoner in other words.
- (32) While dealers should be dealt with, I think there should be a system to where someone caught in possession of small amounts of relatively non-harmful drugs should have a chance to keep it from their record. If you make them take a drug test every month on their expense (somehow make it cheaper), I think that you will keep more people out of the jail system. If people are able to learn from their mistakes and prove their clean, I think that they have less of a chance to go to the jail system.
- (33) Lighten up on cannabis laws.
- (34) There should not be mandatory minimums for drug crimes, and some drugs should be decriminalized.
- (35) I really believe that punishment for drug possession crimes are too tough, and are causing more harm than good. Successful, intelligent, contributing citizens who were convicted of having a small amount of illegal drugs when they were young, have to deal with that the rest of their lives. That is a burden on society that is unnecessary.
- (36) Drug laws too harsh--Medical MJ should be allowed.
- (37) Legalizing and regulating some illegal drugs would take the thriving industry out of the hands of often violent criminals, and would allow them to be taxed. As it stands, many nonviolent and/or poor people are incarcerated, needlessly.
- (38) The 'Drug War' is a lost cause - too many people making too much money & I don't just mean the offenders.
- (39) Marijuana should be legalized and all further prosecution for marijuana-related infractions should cease immediately. That would save really a lot of money that could go into positive

- programs.
- (40) Soft drugs such as marijuana should be de-criminalized. Kids with a joint don't need their futures ruined. Given the severely negative attitude toward Texas from the rest of the country and the world, a Justice System that was progressive, forward-thinking and a drug policy that brought us out of the dark ages would do a lot for tourism, business and public opinion, while lowering the crime rate significantly.
 - (41) Stop wasting money to put honest kids using recreational drugs like marijuana and alcohol in jail and/or probationary, community service. This is totally unnecessary and a gross waste of resources. The criminal system should focus on violent crimes or hard drug distribution only and stop blemishing the records of citizens who mean no harm to the public, simply for the sake of enacting very expensive fines on these individuals which go directly back into the criminal system. Perhaps people who are blatantly DWI should be arrested, but the DUI by a minor charge should be completely removed as it is not benefiting our community in any way other than pumping money into the system and damaging the personal records of so many.
 - (42) Stop sending people to jail because of marijuana possession.
 - (43) Stop arresting minor marijuana offenses. These people are non-violent, non-addict for the most part and they do not rob and kill for their drug of choice. Alcohol kills more people than all illegal drugs combined...so prioritize accordingly, please!
 - (44) Small amounts of drugs for personal use ought to be decriminalized.
 - (45) Legalize drugs.
 - (46) Reform the drug laws towards treatment and work towards legalizing and regulating currently illegal drugs so that the problem will no longer be one of criminal concerns but of health concerns.
 - (47) Reduce the penalties for certain drug offenses.
 - (48) Personal drug possession does not hurt the general public. there should be no prison time for that.
 - (49) I suggest that Texas, and the nation, decriminalize marijuana.
 - (50) I think that drug convictions should not have as much money spent on them for incarceration. This is a nonviolent crime that is often a result of other societal ills.
 - (51) No legitimate business would sell drugs to children or recruit them to sell to their peers. This happened during alcohol prohibition and it is happening today. Once again, prohibition gives children easier access to drugs, and thugs! The Controlled Substances Act is one of those bad laws like the Fugitive Slave Act and the Volstead Act. When juries refuse to convict on 'drug crime,' drug warriors will be politically dead bodies. Jury nullification is a constitutional power tool we the people pack! Alcohol prohibition taught us, when a drugs production and distribution is left to gangsters and cartels it triggers more danger to users and society by increasing violent crime and corruption of public officials. It was called, 'the noble experiment', but what did we learn? The lessons of history continue to be ignored and truth has been suppressed, about marijuana's medicinal use, giving drug prohibition a more sinister aspect. Tobacco, alcohol and pharmaceuticals kill about 25% of the people who die each year in the U.S. The drug war hysteria is created to take our minds off these legal killers we tolerate. Less than one 1 percent die from all illicit drug use, none, nada, no deaths are attributed to marijuana. Clearly, our policies are more about profit than the well being of the individual. Our DEA overseers have harassed the sick and dying, shamed and destroyed families, locked up and killed many (including enforcement) over one of the safest therapeutically active plants known to man; while FDA 'overseers' allowed

more pharmaceutical killers on the market. Both agencies exacerbate problems instead of solving them. They should be disbanded. Follow the money, expose the root of all evil to overcome cynicism with hope for our vision of a free nation! In the spirit of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. with our Bible and Constitution always close at hand, 'We will overcome,' drug abuse compassionately with treatment. Support for the federal war on drugs is inconsistent with support for individual freedom, constitutional government and the teachings of Jesus.

- (52) Most marijuana users are NOT criminals and SHOULD NOT be punished for responsible usage.
- (53) LESSEN THE MANDATORY TIME FOR DRUG RECREATIONAL USERS
- (54) Legalize marijuana and you can save billions in this state currently being wasted chasing that phantom demon. Then you can keep the truly violent incarcerated.
- (55) Incarcerating people strictly for the consensual act of buying, selling or using any substance - legal or otherwise - where no act of violence or property crime is involved is squandering tax money. A person addicted to Cocaine, Meth or Heroin needs help if they ask for it, if not leave them alone. Drug related property crime and violent crime are caused by Prohibition NOT drugs. Tell legislators to stop wasting my tax money by ending prohibition. Marijuana should be legal and regulated like alcohol and tobacco.
- (56) I'm very tired of paying good money to send non-violent drug users to prison. In fact, I think it's time we stopped this silly drug war and started looking at other ways to deal with the issue of drug use. Our current approach is just making the problem worse.
- (57) I think we should decriminalize marijuana, in degrees, and see how it affects the prison system. We can use models, from other countries that have already done something like this, to hypothesize and predict. There are also several other drugs that could be considered 'minor' that should be decriminalized.
- (58) We should de-criminalize many activities or at the least establish degrees of seriousness from misdemeanor to felony.
- (59) I believe that the 'War on Drugs' should be terminated. The idea of incarcerating people for non-violent 'crimes' is wrong. If the laws were changed to eliminate these vice crimes, there would be more than enough prison space for violent offenders and it would cost less.
- (60) Arresting for drug possession IS unconstitutional.
- (61) Get rid of mandatory minimum sentences for drugs.
- (62) As this country learned in prohibition making things illegal that the majority of people do not truly believe are that wrong just tends to give rise to a criminal culture that causes more social problems. After twenty or more years of increasing penalties for drugs, more people than ever are using drugs - WE HAVE LOST THE WAR ON DRUGS - it is time for more common sense approaches to these kinds of issues. Repeal modern day prohibition - we will decrease crime and improve society by taking the money out of this activity. Politicians, judges, lawyers and big business all profit the most from the illegal drug trade.
- (63) Some drugs (ex. marijuana) could be de-criminalized.
- (64) Less stringent laws for marijuana possession.
- (65) Drug use and possession is only considered harmful because it is illegal. Laws defining non-violent drug related events as crimes should be reanalyzed and in many cases repealed or at least not enforced. People currently imprisoned solely under those laws should be released without hesitation.
- (66) Drug Prohibition has failed... drug use/abuse/dependence should be addressed through means other than the Criminal Justice System.

- (67) Drug offenders do not belong in prison.
- (68) Drug crimes should be abolished.
- (69) Decriminalize most drugs, and focus on using the money to catch and incarcerate persons who are actually dangerous. Having drugs be illegal creates crime and criminals.
- (70) Decriminalize Drug possession.
- (71) How can you send someone with a drug addiction to jail. they need help. put them in jail and they will hate the government more.
- (72) Drug-related crimes should be treated differently than violent crimes or white-collar crimes such as embezzlement.
- (73) Ease up on recreational drug offenders.
- (74) I think nonviolent drug offenders term sentences should be reviewed and shortened. I do not feel a big threat from a non violent drug offender as compared to the threat I feel a threat from a violent offender.
- (75) Fewer, if any, prison sentences for drug offenses, especially possession only cases.
- (76) Non-violent drug offenders should NOT be taking up prison space.
- (77) It sounds like we need to reduce the prison sentences for non-violent drug offenders.
- (78) I feel very strongly about not incarcerating nonviolent drug offenders. This is the biggest problem with the Criminal Justice system.
- (79) I don't want tax dollars spent housing 'pot heads,' violent criminals need reform not casual drug addict. Stop the war on drugs and really start an effective war on violent crime and psychological health. If people were of healthy mind they would do hard drugs. For the record, I don't use drugs.
- (80) People on non-violent drug charges need not be in prison at all! Our prisons are full of such people, who are spending money we badly need for other programs.
- (81) I thoroughly believe that incarcerating non-violent, non-recidivate drug users that have committed no other crime is a waste of tax dollars.
- (82) Drug offenses should be penalized via fines instead of incarceration. This would provide more funds into the system and that would one less body in our already overcrowded prisons.
- (83) STOP SENDING NON-VIOLENT DRUG USERS TO PRISON.
- (84) STOP putting non-violent drug offenders in prison. This is not solving their (the offenders') usage/problems and is leaving LESS room to house violent criminals that ARE actually a threat to society.
- (85) Stop incarcerating non-violent drug offenders. It is a waste of taxpayer money.
- (86) Remove the non-violent drug-possession offenders from jail!
- (87) My biggest concern is that drug offenders are thrown in prison with the attitude of 'throw away the key'. Those incarcerated for possession only are non-violent and their only victim is themselves, and then the taxpayer because we pay to house them for too many years.
- (88) Drug convictions should be dealt with differently. It has been proven that negative reinforcement is MUCH LESS effective than positive reinforcement, which probably has a lot to do with why such a large percentage of criminals return to prison, along with the probability that living in a prison environment for such a long period most likely completely de-socializes a person.
- (89) Stop locking up marijuana offenders, it is not a narcotic!
- (90) Non-violent drug users should be out of the prison system altogether. We can't afford to let prisons become an ever-larger portion of the state budget.
- (91) Citizens of Texas who use drugs within their own circle of friends purely for enjoyment

should not be considered a risk to the police force or the common public.

(92) Quit sending non-violent drug users to jail.

- This is probably no news, but I think that drugs are a huge problem, leading to much of the homelessness, prostitution, and crime. Stronger measures should be taken to punish drug dealers, and to make sure drug users stick to treatment and get off drugs. I have seen several prostitutes in our neighborhood disappear for a few weeks or months, and coming back with a lot more meat on their bones and looking a lot healthier. Clearly they went to jail and were off drugs for a while, which did them a lot of good. Unfortunately, they go right back on the streets and right back to using. Drug dealing is currently very profitable. It shouldn't be.
- Drug dealers should be heavily fined or incarcerated proportionally to the offense.

REHABILITATION & OTHER ALTERNATIVES OUTSIDE PRISON WALLS

- (1) I believe we should spend more money on treatment than on prison because treatment helped me and I am in a professional field now.
- (2) This state has a vehicle to help in prison reform and a way to stop the revolving door. The reason I say this is from fact the state has a program to address substance abuse issues with non-violent offenders, but have allowed it collect dust. As one popular governor of this state once said it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see take locking up every offender is not the solution. Don't get me wrong in what I'm saying violent offenders need to be locked up, but those offenders who have had a history of substance abuse and no recourse for help needs to be looked at, for instance I get a dirty U/A I get locked up probation or parole revoked no one addresses the substance issue so I become just another stat for politicians to use for re-elections the get tough on drugs and crime venue. I could go on but who will hear a formerly incarcerated offender who had drug problems which started his incarceration's in the 80's and not until 1991 did he get any type of help, which really changed his life, but I wish people would think there is always an action and then an reaction, and then a consequence. How many substance abusing offenders really are given the tools to look at and make the correct decisions in those situations. Treatment and Mandatory Peer to Peer Support Groups (offenders listen to offender's and are willing to try if they trust).
- (3) I'm watching crime go up in the area I live in (Dallas). We supposedly have a low unemployment rate but many people simply aren't counted anymore. They can't find jobs and self-medicate with drugs. I want to see more money on treatment and education for non-violent offenders. It not only costs a lot of money to incarcerate low level drug offenders, the rest of the family is often thrust further into a spiral of poverty and public assistance that costs the tax payers even more money. I would rather see them decriminalize possession of marijuana and tax it to death - then take that tax money to fund more drug treatment programs and education. We waste too much money on chasing pot users and it doesn't stop the usage.

- (4) I don't know much about specific courts in Texas, but recently, I did a lot of research on the SHORT program in Travis County. Based on that research, I wish that more money would be allocated to drug diversion courts, specifically for more resources...like job placement, education...a long with all the other programs it already has in regards to treatment and such.
- (5) Deferred adjudication system needs to be reformed. My sister attempted suicide after being raped 2 years ago and unfortunately used a controlled substance. She was sent to jail for 6 months and given deferred adjudication. She is now out of jail, has received therapy for the rape, has a 4.0 GPA in biomedical sciences and hopes to be a researcher. She is a brilliant woman and could greatly benefit society, however given the difficulties she experienced in finding an apartment on deferred adjudication, she will probably have trouble getting into graduate school despite her intelligence, perfect grades, glowing recommendations from faculty members. In short, she will probably have to attend school and work abroad. She will probably cure cancer one day, but because of the draconian deferred adjudication program, she will be forced to work in another country. First-time, non-violent, drug offenders should be offered drug treatment and treatment for problems that LEAD to drug use and abuse. They should then be subjected to drug testing through the probation system, and then have their records expunged after a year or so. This would reserve beds for real criminals, and not forever ruin the lives of those who made a mistake.
- (6) From 40 years of criminal law practice in DFW I believe the prevailing hostility to rehabilitative programs in and out of prison is misguided and unfortunate. Most offenders remain in society or return there sooner or later. They need to learn how to avoid antisocial behavior. That should be the first goal of the system.
- (7) Having worked with and having a family member serve time for a non-violent drug offense, I believe that it is of the utmost importance to ensure that non-violent drug offenders receive proper recovery through rehabilitation.
- (8) The current CJ system in Texas is NOT working. Major and perhaps unpopular but proven successful changes need to be made immediately. For example decriminalizing drug usage and treating it as an illness needing treatment rather than a crime needing punishment would free up resources needed to enforce the punishment of violent felons. At the same time it might intervene in the lives of drug users and keep them from progressing into a life of crime.
- (9) As a taxpayer, I'm disgusted with how much money we spend in Texas to incarcerate non-violent drug offenders – especially since these offenders, instead of getting treatment, STILL have access to drugs inside prison walls. Programs to offer treatment have been successful in other states, saving taxpayers a great deal of money and getting people the treatment they need.
- (10) Alcoholics should not receive felonies; they should receive treatment in the forms of counseling and education.
- (11) I really feel strongly about treatment programs, especially mental treatment programs like counseling. I have a sibling that is in and out of jail because he is bipolar and makes some very poor decisions (he was just officially diagnosed three months ago), and our experience has been that, if there's an issue, 'send him to jail'. I thought that the intent was to keep people out of jail since it is such a burden on tax payers, but apparently, after a year and half of sobriety, a night of marijuana usage is enough to send someone directly to jail and possibly prison. I have been disappointed in the Texas Criminal Justice System.
- (12) Our society's problems that arise from drug abuse are the result of misguided policies at the

national level. Until we as a nation face the reality that drug use cannot be eradicated any more than alcohol use could be eliminated during Prohibition, we are going to spend an inordinate percentage of criminal justice funding putting folks behind bars. Unfortunately, under the current legal system, the Texas Criminal Justice system has few options. The only rational approach, in my opinion, is to place as many non-violent drug users (especially recreational users) on probation or in treatment programs as possible.

- (13) I feel many people wind up in prison in the first place because they are not prepared or equipped to live as self-sustaining, independent adults...at least by legal means. I do not see this as the fault of the criminal justice system. However, for many, it becomes the only place to acquire social and vocational skills; something a correctional facility might not be able to accommodate. Therefore I feel that supervision outside of prison is a great way to avoid the problematic things people learn behind bars. I want to be safe from the robbers, burglars, sex offenders and other predators. By the same token I would like to see treatment for non-violent offenders concentrate on restitution, rehabilitation and restoration outside of a prison environment.
- (14) CONSIDER REHABILITATION WHERE DESIRED FOR LESSER OFFENSES.
- (15) Drug use related crimes should not require incarceration. Treatment and counseling would be a far better and cheaper way of doing things.
- (16) I support the treatment options for non-violent criminals rather than incarceration. We throw whole lives away by dumping people in prison for small crimes--and create cycles of unemployment (or, unemployable workers) in the process. That really seems to me to be a waste.
- (17) We have got to quit incarcerating and start rehabilitating outside prison walls. We have got to lessen the amount of time a person is sentenced to prison and consider a shorter prison term and better parole. It is costing our state too much money to incarcerate those who could be rehabilitated outside prison walls.
- (18) We need more Drug Courts they work, save money, stops recidivism.
- (19) We as a community need to have compassion for people who break the law. we need treatment center to help this people, instead of prison. If treatment does not work. then it prison time. Maybe a year.
- (20) Treatment rather than punitive aspects should be enhanced. Drug Courts and problem solving courts should be promoted.
- (21) Rehab the occasional Drug User/Alcoholic.
- (22) We must greatly reduce the number of people in our prisons! Other ways to deal with people who commit crimes that do not affect others must be found!
- (23) Overall, I believe our state will be safer and healthier if we accept medical research that addiction is an illness and treat it like one, and focus our prisons on violent offenders.
- (24) I favor rehabilitation programs outside of prison for non-violent crimes.
- (25) Those that do not threaten the lives of others should not be in prison. They should be punished or rehabilitated another way. Texas wants to save money, this seems like the easiest way!
- (26) Non-violent, non-sexual offenders (recreational drug users especially) should be put in treatment proportionate to their level of dependency on a drug (repeat offenders of stronger drugs like heroin and cocaine. these should be watched and helped out of their addiction, not punished.
- (27) I believe the problem with our over-crowdedness and recidivism is that we treat all law breakers the same. We should at the very least look at replacing prison time for other forms

- of punishment and rehabilitation for non-violent crimes.
- (28) I believe that people should not be put in jail solely because of drug use, because they are only hurting themselves and shouldn't be considered a threat to society. They should instead be put in treatment programs and helped back into society.
 - (29) The Texas Criminal Justice system should be re-vamped so that it prioritizes the rehabilitation rather than incarceration.
 - (30) Drug offenders are better served by treatment.
 - (31) More treatment for non-violent, non-theft prisoners.
 - (32) The Texas Criminal Justice System is currently overusing incarceration. More alternate sentencing needs to be used focusing on treatment instead of incarceration for the non-violent offenders. Prisons make people worse.
 - (33) I think that there are quite a few criminals that are suffering from some type of disorder that can improve if given treatment instead of punishment
 - (34) It currently appears to be about punishment, not rehabilitation. It needs to rehabilitate people. Locking people up for using drugs is a waste of my taxpayer money.
 - (35) The drug 'war' should be abandoned with the state giving serious consideration to the decriminalization of lesser drugs (marihuana) and greater emphasis on drug treatment.
 - (36) Too much space taken up by non-violent offenders with drug use issues that are better addressed through treatment/change in laws.
 - (37) We should stop incarcerating non-violent offenders and slow incarceration rates down. We are wasting prison space and money that could be used for education and rehabilitation. Non-violent offenders should be treated and fined; at least on a three strikes rule. Stop building prisons; the more we build the more we fill them up; prisons are overcrowded. We are incarcerating more people than any other country in the world and our crime rates have not reduced; obviously it is not working and we need a new approach.
 - (38) We need to quit locking up non-violent offenders and turning them into felons. Treat the disease of addiction as a disease. Realistic mandatory rehab, six months to a year mandatory. We are not solving the problems of crime as we are currently maxed out in our county jails and in TDCJ. The system is not working very well, recidivism is still far too high.
 - (39) Offenders should be rehabilitated, not warehoused. Treatment should be used before imprisonment.
 - (40) We need more drug treatment centers, not short term, it takes a lot of help to stay off of drugs. most of our crimes or drug related.
 - (41) Non-violent drug offenses should not be subject to incarceration--only treatment.
 - (42) I believe treatment and diversion programs should be our number one priority.
 - (43) Treatment for ALL non-violent drug offenders.
 - (44) We need more rehabilitation centers! Thank you.
 - (45) The prison boom is OVER, and should remain that way. Its no secret now in hindsight that we should have had ample programs in place to 'treat' the problems prior to building them and filling them up. Locking someone up does NOT offer a change in this day and age. Unless PUNISHMENT ONLY was the PRIMARY purpose in the build out in the first place. Now we must consider working equally hard to correct an error and FIX the problem we created.
 - (46) I believe rational drug policy is the best route to effective prison reform. Addiction to alcohol and other drugs is a physiological disease, like epilepsy or cancer, with physiological causes that are beginning to be understood and can be treated by conventional medicine.

Relegating addicts to the criminal justice system overburdens it and reduces the effectiveness with which it can incarcerate and rehabilitate criminals who are dangerous to life and/or property.

- (47) I think the TDCJ places too much emphasis on punishment and not enough on rehabilitation.
- (48) The practice of punishing drug offenders with prison time is clearly ineffective and therefore a waste of tax dollars. Many inmates are able to find access to drugs in prison, others detox without proper medical supervision. Neither situation is likely to lead to a successful recovery. Individuals who have a substance abuse problem need access to treatment.
- (49) The Texas Criminal Justice System has to provide safety to the State of Texas, but must begin to realize this can be accomplished by other avenues than incarceration.
- (50) The focus of efforts should be toward rehabilitation rather than punishment.
- (51) The federal and state drug laws have been repeatedly shown to be ineffective. Much of the money spent on interdiction, prosecution, and incarceration would be better spent on treatment, and education.
- (52) The current TX criminal justice system embodies waste of public resources in terms of valuable human lives as well as public funding. Texas ought to reallocate its prison funding to education and treatment for people both in and out of the prison system.
- (53) The criminal justice system should allocate prison resources away from non-violent offenders and assign them treatment rather than incarceration.
- (54) The budget seems skewed towards the prison system when there is in fact greater need outside of it-- parole, probation, and treatment options.
- (55) It is time for more non traditional measures; new paradigms that extend beyond criminal justice, perhaps public health models are in dire need.
- (56) More focus should be brought to non-violent offenders. Drug offenders can be rehabilitated in a drug-treatment program (not in a prison). Putting these offenders (often young) in prison gives them access to names & numbers of people who sells drugs on the outside; when they get out, they know where to go to buy drugs. They end up back in prison with a longer sentence.
- (57) More thought and resources should be spent on community justice for non violent offenders. The prisons should send all their non-violent offenders back to the county and require them to come up with alternative sentencing, treatment and worthwhile programs that focus on rehabilitation and paying restitution to the offended.
- (58) Texas is one of the most backwards states in terms of proportional spending for treatment versus incarceration.
- (59) Texas courts rely too heavily on incarceration. A former head of the TDCJ Board, about five years ago, said that 25 percent of the prisoners in TDCJ did not need to be there. Many other individuals who have studied prison demographics, prison policy, etc., including myself, believe that the number is closer to 50 percent. There are effective alternatives to incarceration including treatment for addictions, education, and greater use of the probation and parole systems.
- (60) I think non-violent offenders should be given training and rehabilitation outside the prison system and we should reduce the number of people behind walls.
- (61) TCJ is a hungry, sickly dinosaur. Unlike the Justice systems of other states and countries, Texas still seems to think that throwing people in jail is an effective alternative to rehabilitation and treatment. If Texas continues along its current path we will end up in the

same boat as Mexico with the majority of our over-crowded prisons filled with addicts in need of treatment, rather than incarceration. Addicts need to be patients instead of prisoners.

- (62) Strongly endorse the use of treatment to divert non-violent offenders.
- (63) States who have spent more money on treatment programming outside the prison setting usually have a lower recidivism rate than states that have higher incarceration rates.
- (64) Spending on education and treatment is essential for this state to succeed in the world economy. I am especially concerned for individuals who are unable due to language deficiencies, transportation deficiencies, and mental illness to understand the legal systems and navigate through the systems. I am a public servant who sees many, many mentally ill people or people off their medication who are arrested and jailed simply because they lack the healthcare and treatment programs others can afford, travel to, or understand (due to language barriers).
- (65) I believe in rehabilitating people. I believe in 12 step programs. The success of AA has been proven with millions of recovering alcoholics including members of my family.
- (66) Some people, probably the vast majority should not be incarcerated, but should be offered the opportunity for treatment as an alternative
- (67) REINSTATE DRUG REHAB PROGRAMS.
- (68) PREVENTION WORKS - NEED MORE EMPHASIS ON TREATMENT OPTIONS.
- (69) Overall, I believe the public deserves a substantial overhaul of the criminal justice system, one that delegates more time, funding, and manpower to rehabilitation and recovery. Not only does a justice system based heavily on incarceration charge the non-offending population with an unnecessary financial burden, but it equally disappoints with high rates of recidivism, strained family ties, and ultimately ensures a new generation of criminals -- children of the incarcerated. Treatment facilities should be the primary focus of a more progressive justice system, especially for nonviolent drug offenders, who have the greatest potential for reform and becoming productive members of society.
- (70) It's too big! What a waste of money, especially when its impact on deterrence is questionable. More education, more treatment (inside prisons/jails and out).
- (71) Drug users should be sent to treatment centers, not prison.
- (72) Non-violent drug offenders should not be sent to prison unless they have been convicted of some kind of other crime in the past. We need treatment. The prisons are clogged with non-violent drug offenders who, for the benefit of society and the justice system, should be put on probation and given mandatory treatment programs. These people are harming no one but themselves. Prison is not the place for them.
- (73) Non-violent drug offenders should not be incarcerated. This is a waste of money. More money should be spent on rehabilitation.
- (74) Much more emphasis treatment/rehab for non-violent offenders.
- (75) People convicted of possession or selling drugs to fund their own drug habit should be put into a comprehensive drug treatment program that includes group and private therapy, AA, NA or other such programs. If applicable they should have parenting classes, anger management, job training, and other programs that help them to become productive citizens.
- (76) More treatment, less prison time.
- (77) More treatment programs for drug abusers/distributors that continuously follow-up with these people.
- (78) More needs to be invested in treatment and prevention.

- (79) As far as non-violent, drug offenders, there should be more treatment centers for them to go to rather than prisons.
- (80) Prison may have started out in the earliest beginnings as a punishment for being bad, but that approach no longer works. In the 21st century, criminal justice should be about holding the most violent for life, treating the non-violent without going to prison, and preparing everyone in between those 2 extremes for re-entry into the community via education sufficient to obtain employment, treatment for addictions, work- training in technical fields, and counseling for abuse suffered and behavior modification to deal with other people without engaging in conflict.
- (81) Look at what works in other countries – more efforts focusing on rehabilitation and reversing the process that creates criminals (poverty, lack of parental interest/guidance, lack of education...), less efforts on punitive services.
- (82) Let's use more non-incarceration methods to carry out our efforts toward increasing public safety, punishing offenders, and rehabilitating offenders. There are lots of proven ways (evidence-based in other states & other countries) to do this that are more cost effective and less damaging to society than incarceration.
- (83) Less punitive, more treatment.
- (84) It should remember that it exists to rehabilitate those convicted of a crime: punishment and/or confinement only achieve this for some individuals. Other means should be in place to help those for whom this type of system does not work.
- (85) It needs an overhaul so it can begin to focus on the merits of rehabilitation and the effects it can have statewide in reducing our prisoner population because what we have in place is not working.
- (86) It is my belief that incarcerating non-violent offenders (where I consider any sexual crime such as rape or child molestation as violent) is a misuse of funds as they are for the most part not a threat to society. It is better to fine drug users or force them into therapy.
- (87) It is important to invest money in rehabilitation and crime prevention programs, rather than in repression.
- (88) It is appalling we don't have more money spent on therapeutic community prisons. the recidivism rates of these compared with traditional prisons are staggering
- (89) I would like to see more funding for and more emphasis on treatment/rehabilitation programs for non-violent, non-sexual offenders.
- (90) I worked within the TDCJ system and noticed when the major cuts in budget were made – it reduced drug rehabilitation programs and chaplaincy access and other important program that increase the I/M's success rate. I would like to see drug-related crimes be given rehabilitation and a more structured program to increase success rates, with frequent drug tests and clear rules of punishment.
- (91) I think the state is far too focused on putting people in prison, rather than helping them truly become productive, functional citizens. The way prisons are currently run, I would not expect them to be very successful at rehabilitation. The system seems more focused on retribution – which is ultimately short-sighted – rather than rehabilitation.
- (92) I think that non-violent drug offenses should not be looked at as a crime against the state. I feel the state has no right to say what an individual can do to him/herself. Once that individual affects another, then the state should step in. I am not saying that drug abuse is not a problem in the state of Texas, but I do not feel that prisons do any good to combat this problem. To address this problem, treatment is a better method. The success of treatment should be defined more by the contribution to society that individual can make

more so than their complete abstinence (i.e. recreational use does not necessarily need to be condemned).

- (93) People do not become rehabilitated with a stigma stuck to them for life for making a bad choice or mistake. Using treatment programs instead would make it easier on the budget, help more and reduce that stigma.
- (94) I firmly believe that we need more rehabilitation rather than incarceration for non-violent drug offenses. These people need help, which they will not receive in prison. We would actually save money if we would get drug users treatment instead of locking-up them up in prison time after time.
- (95) I would support separation of violent and repeat offenders from non-violent and first-time offenders, with the violent being punished and the others having shorter, treatment-based programs.
- (96) Credit inmate for completed 12 step.
- (97) I don't believe in the incarceration of non-violent drug offenders, particularly marijuana offenders. Distributing however connotes the occasional requirement for violence (since there is no lawful protection they have to protect themselves) so that is a different story. I believe in therapy and rehabilitation over punishment and retribution. I believe that it is a waste of time and money to incarcerate a non-violent drug offender who is a minimum risk to society. Being a risk to themselves is not a viable reason to jail them. I'm more afraid of the irrational, dangerous behavior of a drunkard than a stoner in other words.
- (98) While dealers should be dealt with, I think there should be a system to where someone caught in possession of small amounts of relatively non-harmful drugs should have a chance to keep it from their record. If you make them take a drug test every month on their expense (somehow make it cheaper), I think that you will keep more people out of the jail system. If people are able to learn from their mistakes and prove their clean, I think that they have less of a chance to go to the jail system.
- (99) Perhaps a vocational unit could be created for select skills and work that can be completed inside the walls? Mobile homes? or something of value that can be sold to the community with any profits used to offset incarceration costs - inmates selected to participate should not be paid for the privilege of getting to participate and receive training.
- (100) Put the non-violent offenders to WORK paying back their victims. There are ways to punish people besides locking them up and punishing the taxpayers too. Locking someone up costs the taxpayer \$16,000 a year, plus welfare for their families, plus their children (truly innocent victims of all of this) pay a terrible price.
- (101) More money and effort should be put into community alternatives to incarceration and restorative justice.
- (102) We see no evidence that any form of rehabilitation is apparent or intended within the Texas Justice System. The manner in which the system works would be acceptable and correct if the results showed that it had a reducing effect on crime levels. The fact is that crime levels are increasing particularly for serious crime, therefore the system must be deemed to be failing and other ways should be tried, but we feel the mentality is not there, or perhaps the ability, to investigate and implement alternatives.
- (103) I believe that more emphasis should be placed on community-based programs to enable offenders to change behaviors and become more productive.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT/ISSUES

- (1) It's really sad to see these poor people suffer without their families for so long.
- (2) Visitation is one of the biggest issues that needs to be addressed. A current rule of 2 hours per weekend is not enough to help keep a family intact during this difficult time.
- (3) The department needs to let the families have more types of contact with the inmates especially children unless their crime is sexual assault, phone access and have them closer to home especially the inmates with more than 1 children.
- (4) TDCJ need to increase more on family programs.
- (5) Families and friends need more communication about the prison system.
- (6) Besides the person hurt by the offense, the family of the offender suffers and a system of true help with their needs...Education, security of housing, emotional needs. Some people will change given direction, you cannot pile money up and expect change. The children need the feeling of structure, and that they have a place in life.
- (7) The families that are left behind need education, counseling and some form of assistance.
- (8) Work with children with incarcerated parents.
- (9) More keeping prison inmates and families closer together.
- (10) I don't think their families should be allotted in compensation for their family member being incarcerated. But they should receive help finding a job if they are not currently employed and they should be allowed counseling for their children.
- (11) In my experience (worked and ministered in prison and with families of inmates since 1991) I think one of the most detrimental aspects of the criminal justice system is that it is not 'family friendly.' In most cases the family has not been party to the trouble a mom or dad has been in. They are often treated disrespectfully. They are miles and miles away from their spouse, mother or father who is in prison. The strength of the family is the key to success in parole. Family issues are critical to the process.
- (12) Family should be in place during the prison process and they should not be sent further from home but closer so that family will be part of there rehabilitation.
- (13) Not enough is done to work with families who have members that are incarcerated. This is particularly hard on children.
- (14) I believe we should involve family and friends as much as possible in this process. Isolating prisoners from the support system of family and friends is not the best thing. We have limited visits, and limited things we can do to offer a show of support or even be involved in this process. If you polled family and friends I promise you would have an overwhelming response of positive votes for them becoming involved in the process and helping rehabilitate their family member or friend so that they can come home and become a successful member of society again. We want to help as much as possible but we are limited as to what we can do.
- (15) Place offenders as close to their home as possible for the benefit of them and their families.
- (16) Please help to maintain family ties (especially mother/children) by increased visitation and mail contact. Unless the parent is a danger to his/her child, a connected family is a good bet for both prisoner and child.
- (17) When an offender is treated, the whole family needs to be treated.
- (18) Families need more support to help cope with having family members who are incarcerated or released.

- (19) The families and particularly children of inmates are innocent victims of the prison system and should be given access to more support programs.
- (20) Education, rehab, healthcare and visitation from family and friends all directly result in recidivism reduction.
- (21) One of the most inhumane conditions of being incarcerated is the isolation from friends and families. Yet, this seems to be the purpose of such things as distant location of facility, difficulty in locating a prisoner, difficulty in being able to qualify to visit, etc.
- (22) Families need direct involvement in Parole process.

APPENDIX B: TCJC SURVEY QUESTIONS

The purpose of the following survey is to measure the pulse of the general public's perceptions about the effectiveness and efficiency of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, as well as to better understand those who have been directly impacted by Texas' criminal justice system.

SERVICES

1. RECEIVE & SEND MAIL

Currently, prisoners cannot have food, clothing, jewelry, and toiletries mailed to them by anyone, nor can they receive books, magazines, and newspapers unless mailed by the publisher. What do you feel prisoners should have direct access to through the mail? (Select All that Apply)

- food
- clothing
- jewelry
- toiletries
- books
- magazines
- newspapers
- No change needed

2. VISITATION BY FRIENDS & FAMILY

Currently, prisoners are allowed one 2-hour visit per weekend, with up to 2 adult visitors; children under 16 years of age are not counted towards that total. With regards to the frequency and time of visitation, which of the following do you believe should be allowed? (Select One Only)

- Families/friends should be allowed increased visitation
- Families/friends should have less visitation
- No change needed

3. VISITATION BY FRIENDS & FAMILY

With regards to the number of visitors, which of the following do you believe should be allowed? (Select One Only)

- More family members/friends should be allowed visitation
- Fewer family members/friends should be allowed visitation
- No change needed

4. FAMILY ASSISTANCE

Currently, individuals with questions or concerns about their incarcerated family member can talk to their Family Liaison Officer during visitation hours. If no sufficient answer is given or no resolution

is reached, the family can speak to a TDCJ Ombudsman. What services do you think families of the incarcerated should have access to? (Select All that Apply)

- Family counseling
- A TDCJ Ombudsman
- Legal assistance
- Transportation for children to visit family member
- A Family Liaison Officer
- Notice to family prior to visitation of potential unavailability of prisoner (e.g.: prisoner is in administrative segregation)

5. RECREATION

Currently, prisoners have access to recreational activities (mentioned in questions 5-7) based on their classification, medical status, and security factors. With regard to prisoners' access to basketball, handball, volleyball, and weightlifting in gymnasiums or outdoor recreation yards, what level of access do you think prisoners should have? (Select One Only)

- Prisoners should have more access to ball games and weightlifting
- Prisoners should have less access to ball games and weightlifting
- No change needed

6. RECREATION

With regard to prisoners' access to television sets in dayrooms, what level of access do you think prisoners should have? (Select One Only)

- Prisoners should have more access to television sets
- Prisoners should have less access to television sets
- No change needed

7. RECREATION

With regard to prisoners' access to table games (checkers and dominoes), reading, artwork, and leatherwork in the library and craft shops, what level of access do you think prisoners should have? (Select One Only)

- Prisoners should have more access to table games, reading, artwork, and leatherwork
- Prisoners should have less access to table games, reading, artwork, and leatherwork
- No change needed

8. CHILDREN

Children are 6-8 times more likely to end up in jail themselves if they have or have had 1 parent in prison. Furthermore, children are 9 times more likely to end up in jail themselves if they have or have had 2 parents in prison. Which if any of these programs or recommendations do you think would be effective in preventing children of the incarcerated from entering prison themselves? (Select All that Apply)

- House the parent(s) in a facility as close to their children as possible
- Provide financial support to these children's caretakers
- Provide counseling for children with an incarcerated parent or parents
- Increase parent-child contact through more visitation time
- Provide children with tutoring programs to increase their educational success

TREATMENT & SPENDING

9. PURPOSE

TDCJ manages approximately 157,000 adult prisoners in state prisons, state jails, and private correctional facilities. What do you think **SHOULD BE** the primary purpose of state prisons, jails, and correctional facilities? (Select One Only)

- To punish a person convicted of a crime through confinement
- To deter future crime from occurring
- To reduce recidivism rates (the return to criminal activity)
- To protect the public by removing violent criminals from the streets
- To rehabilitate a person convicted of a crime

10. DRUG-RELATED CRIME

What do you think would prevent a non-violent drug user from committing a drug-related crime again? (Select One Only)

- Sending him/her to treatment
- Requiring him/her to report regularly to a probation officer with immediate placement in prison if he/she commits a drug-related probation violation
- Requiring him/her to undergo mandatory community service or another non-incarceration based punishment
- Requiring him/her to report regularly to a probation officer with immediate placement in drug treatment if he/she commits a drug-related probation violation
- Sending him/her to prison

11. SAFETY

In regards to safety, what do you think that sending nonviolent, non-sexual offenders to treatment programs rather than prisons will make Texans? (Select One Only)

- More safe
- Equally as safe
- Less safe
- Not safe at all

12. EDUCATION

Only two-thirds of prisoners in Texas' prison system have completed high school. What do you think that would happen if Texas spent more money on increasing high school graduation rates? (Select One Only)

- A great reduction in the number of people entering prison
- Somewhat of a reduction in the number of people entering prison
- An increase in the number of people entering prison
- No impact on the number of people entering prison

13. SPENDING

It costs approximately \$16,000 to house a non-violent offender in prison for one year. However, when the state sends non-violent offenders to treatment programs instead of prison, it saves from 2 to 4 dollars on incarceration costs for every \$1 spent – potentially saving the state between \$8,000 and \$12,000 each year for every non-violent offender. How do you believe prison dollars should be spent? (Select One Only)

- Instead of incarceration, spend the money on treatment for non-violent offenders and use the savings on education specifically
- Instead of incarceration, spend the money on treatment and use the savings to make more treatment programs available
- Instead of incarceration, spend the money on treatment for non-violent offenders and save the money for other purposes
- Continue to spend the money on housing non-violent offenders in prisons

14. BUDGETING

TDCJ oversees approximately 150,000 individuals in prison and more than 600,000 individuals on probation or parole. However, the Texas Legislature allocates 90% of its criminal justice budget towards housing prisoners in correctional facilities, and only 10% on probation, parole, and treatment for prisoners. What percentage of Texas' 2.5 billion dollar criminal justice budget do you think should be allocated towards prisons, and what percentage should be allocated towards probation, parole, and treatment? (Select One Only)

- 90% towards prisons, and 10% towards probation/parole/treatment
- 70% towards prisons, and 30% towards probation/parole/treatment
- 50% towards prisons, and 50% towards probation/parole/treatment
- 30% towards prisons, and 70% towards probation/parole/treatment
- 10% towards prisons, and 90% towards probation/parole/treatment

15. RE-ENTRY

Approximately 95% of prisoners will re-enter the free community during their natural lives after they have served their prison term requirements. Many will have parole or probation officers. Currently, parole and probation officers' job performance is NOT measured in terms of the successful transition of these individuals into society – meaning the officer's job performance does not depend on whether the former prisoner gets and holds a job, financially supports his/her family if required

(e.g., child support), or maintains housing. Do you believe that parole and probation officers' job performance (i.e., pay raises, promotions, etc.) should be based on the successful re-entry of parolees and probationers happening under the supervision of these officers? (Select One Only)

- Yes
- No

16. RESPONSIBILITY

If you were given the responsibility of spending our criminal justice dollars, what would you spend the money on? Rank your answers, from what you would spend the most amount of money on, to what you would spend the least amount of money on. (1= most money, 9=least money)

Rank

- More educational programs for prisoners 123456789
- More religious programs for prisoners 123456789
- More funding for parole 123456789
- More work programs for prisoners 123456789
- More training for prison staff and administrators 123456789
- More funding for probation 123456789
- More treatment programs outside of prison walls 123456789
- More prisons 123456789
- More access to healthcare for prisoners 123456789

EMPLOYMENT

17. HIRING

If you were an employer, how willing would you be to hire an adult with a felony conviction for drug possession? (Select One Only)

- Very willing
- Somewhat willing
- Not very willing
- Not willing at all
- I would evaluate this on a case-by-case basis

18. HIRING

If you were an employer, how willing would you be to hire an adult with a felony conviction for drug distribution? (Select One Only)

- Very willing
- Somewhat willing
- Not very willing
- Not willing at all
- I would evaluate this on a case-by-case basis

19. HIRING

If you were an employer, how willing would you be to hire an adult with a felony conviction for a violent crime? (Select One Only)

- Very willing
- Somewhat willing
- Not very willing
- Not willing at all
- I would evaluate this on a case-by-case basis

ABOUT YOU

20. GENDER

What is your gender? (Select One Only)

- Female
- Male
- Other (please specify)

21. RACE

When you are asked to describe yourself racially, what do you usually say that you are? (Select All that Apply)

- Black/African American
- White
- Latino/Hispanic
- Indigenous/Native American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify)

22. AGE

What year were you born?

23. GENERATION

When you are asked to identify yourself in reference to the number of generations your family has lived in the U.S., what do you usually say that you are? (Select One Only)

- Foreign-born/Immigrant
- First Generation Born in the U.S.
- Second Generation Born in the U.S.
- Third Generation Born in the U.S.
- Fourth Generation Born in the U.S.
- More than fifth Generation Born in the U.S.
- Other (please specify)

24. PROFESSION

What area of work or profession are you currently employed? (Please state "not currently employed" if applicable)

- Arts and Culture
- Education and Research
- Environment
- Food Services
- Government
- Health
- Hospitality
- Human Services
- Law Enforcement
- Legal
- Not Currently Employed
- Non-Profit
- Religious Services
- Student
- Technology
- Other (please specify)

25. ECONOMICS

When you are asked to identify yourself as a member of a specific economic class, what do you usually say that you are? (Select One Only)

- Upper Upper Class
- Middle Upper Class
- Lower Upper Class
- Upper Middle Class
- Middle Middle Class
- Lower Middle Class
- Upper Lower Class
- Middle Lower Class
- Lower Lower Class

26. INCOME

What is your annual income? (Select One Only)

- \$0-\$15,000
- \$15,001-\$30,000
- \$30,001-\$45,000
- \$45,001-\$60,000
- \$60,001-\$75,000
- \$75,001-\$90,000
- \$90,001-\$105,000
- \$105,001-\$120,000
- \$120,001-\$135,000
- \$135,001-\$150,000
- more than \$150,000

27. EDUCATION

What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (Select One Only)

- K-8th Grade
- Some High School
- High School Diploma
- Some College
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor Degree
- Master Degree
- Professional Degree
- Doctoral Degree
- Other (please specify)

28. EXPOSURE

What is your experience with the criminal justice system? (Select All that Apply)

- I work for an organization that addresses criminal justice issues
- I work for the prison system
- I have or have had a family member or friend in prison
- I'm currently in prison
- I have no exposure to the prison system
- I'm formerly incarcerated
- I am a prosecutor
- I am a defense attorney
- Other (please specify)

29. CLARITY

What words or questions, if any, were difficult to understand?

30. RECOMMENDATIONS

Use the space below to share your thoughts and recommendations about the Texas Criminal Justice system.

31. CONTACTS

Please provide the e-mail or web-page of any friends, colleagues, or groups that you believe would be interested in participating in this study:

Contact 1:

Contact 2:

Contact 3:

Contact 4:

Contact 5:

Contact 6:

Contact 7:

Contact 8:

Contact 9:

Contact 10: