

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Janet Wood](#)
Subject: FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Private/Before Publication)
Date: Friday, September 27, 2024 1:37:40 PM

From: Texas Sunset Advisory Commission <sunset.website@brightleafgroup.com>
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2024 1:02 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission <sunset@sunset.texas.gov>
Subject: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Private/Before Publication)

Submitted on Fri, 09/27/2024 - 11:01

Submitted by: Visitor

Submitted values are:

Choose the agency that you would like to provide input about

[Texas Department of Criminal Justice](#)

Public Comments

1

First Name

Kimberly

Last Name

Uyechi

Email

City

Temple

State

Texas

Your Comments or Concerns

My son entered the TDCJ system a year and a half ago. We were quite unaware of the situation in Texas prisons prior to this. We have become aware of a number of areas that the TDCJ system is failing inmates in rehabilitation.

It has come to our attention from our son as well as other families of other inmates that inmates are treated subhuman. Science research is very clear that if you treat humans like animals what you will get in return is animal behavior. As a Texas for most of my life I have always thought we as a state

worked hard to be the best but have now realized the great disservice we are doing to many human lives both those incarcerated as well as their families by treating these inmates as far less than human. If we expect those who serve their time to return to society as productive citizens we cannot treat them so poorly. The mistreatment of inmates by some prison personnel is appalling. I've read reports from inmates' families of the physical abuse sustained from prison personnel. Though my son is careful about what he says to us as he doesn't want us to worry I feel sure he has experienced harsh personnel as well but fears retaliation as do many inmates because they have witnessed brutal retaliation.

TDCJ seems to be mismanaging funds as well with regard to meals, however, it is possible other government officials or agencies are pulling funding from TDCJ for other use. My son is a very tall young man and not slight of frame. He entered TDCJ at close to 200 lbs. Not overweight for his height. He has lost around 50 pounds while incarcerated. Most of this has come due to the very little they are fed. We have received reports of a day's food (3 meals) at times being no more than a peanut butter sandwich and a crumbled piece of cornbread. On another day, a boiled egg and cornbread. This is not enough for a small child for a day. At other times 2 or even 3 meals might be available but the portion sizes are the size of a scant spoon full and often no fruit or vegetables of any type or recognizable meat. It is my understanding that those who work in the kitchens often hold back food for those who will pay them for it.

Facility maintenance needs to be a priority. Deteriorating facilities are a visible issue when visiting units but the parts visitors see are the better parts. Many water issues have been reported over the past year. Once on a visit to my son the drink vending machines were out of order and so a dispenser of water was available and appreciated but no visitors were willing to drink from the water as when dispensed into cups the water was visibly brown. The inmates drank it without hesitation saying it's what they normally have. Poor drinking water conditions is a health issue. Clean safe drinking water should always be available.

I'm sure many have commented on the heat and cold in the Texas prisons. I will only mention that the prisons are dangerous places to be in the severe summer heat as well as the colder parts of winter.

Your Proposed Solution

Oversight of prison personnel must be a high priority. Many current ranking personnel in many units do not seem to have a good handle on their personnel or quite possibly could be indifferent to treatment of inmates. Integrity at all levels of TDCJ personnel must be a priority. Training for prison personnel should include psychological understanding of human beings and how they are affected by harsh treatment as well the importance of rehabilitation to our communities our state and families of inmates. We should all be working together for a better Texas and that includes returning inmates to society better than when they entered TDCJ.

I believe the oversight of kitchens in TDCJ must also be a priority. Inmates tasked with working the kitchens must not be allowed to utilize food as a bargaining for their own personal gain. Distribution of meals must be well supervised by personnel of high integrity to insure inmates are fed adequately. Those involved in the dietary planning for TDCJ must make meals a standard across all units. We should be providing inmates with a balanced diet of edible meals. I understand that costs can be a factor but we must find a way to provide better than the current poor situation. Inmates who are fed better will also not feel the necessity to do anything and everything just to have enough food to survive. Commissary food should also not be restricted from inmates as punishment. Certain

commissary food items should be available to inmates at all times at all levels which would help inmates meet nutritional needs and fight the feeling of constant hunger. I believe a balanced diet in appropriate amounts for adults and the availability of at least a moderate amount of supplemental food through commissary should be considered a high priority as it will help the mental state of inmates to avoid placing these people into a state of self preservation.

Facility maintenance needs to be addressed and it may be necessary and actually more cost effective to build new prison facilities and then demolish old facilities to then be replaced with other new facilities rather than continue to maintain very old facilities with ongoing high maintenance issues. I realize cost and the money to do projects is always an issue but the better we make the situation for Texas inmates in these areas the better chance we have at releasing better people back into society who are not so highly affected by the trauma of incarceration in our state. We have to do better, Texas.

My Comments Will Be Made Public

Yes

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Janet Wood](#)
Subject: FW: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Private/Before Publication)
Date: Friday, September 27, 2024 11:59:33 AM

From: Texas Sunset Advisory Commission <sunset.website@brightleafgroup.com>
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2024 11:57 AM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission <sunset@sunset.texas.gov>
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Submitted values are:

Choose the agency that you would like to provide input about

[Texas Department of Criminal Justice Windham School District](#)

Public Comments

1

First Name

Kimberly

Last Name

Uyechi

Email

City

Temple

State

Texas

Your Comments or Concerns

My son entered a TDCJ facility at the age of 18. He was assigned to take GED classes. We have found the Windham School District to be very lacking. It has been our experience that the teachers are inconsistent in being available to the students and of little help. My son has reported to us that he is expected to work on his own which is why he had trouble in school before entering TDCJ as he has some learning difficulties. Because he isn't getting help or tutoring of any type he struggles to understand and will most likely not complete his GED before release. This would be the perfect time

for him to complete it when he has plenty of time on his hands but the help he needs isn't available to him to be successful. More than 2 days a week is necessary for students.

Your Proposed Solution

The way lessons are presented needs to be addressed. Many of these students were not successful in a regular public school before incarceration and needed additional help to understand material. Material must be presented in more than one way to help students succeed. Students also need the help of tutors who can spend individual time with students and address specific topics they need remediation in. Students also need more than two days a week of class time to make sufficient progress

My Comments Will Be Made Public

Yes