

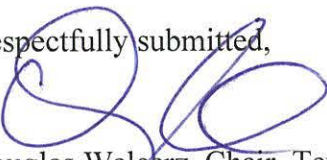
## Written Testimony for the Sunset Advisory Commission

By the Texas Higher Education in Prison Consortium  
Thursday, November 14, 2024

The Texas Higher Education in Prison Consortium (TXHEPC) is a group of twelve Texas colleges and universities that provide virtually all college courses taught in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. We thank the Sunset Advisory Commission for their work, and wish to express our support for five proposals as the Commission prepares recommendations for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and the Windham School District:

1. TXHEPC supports revisions to Rider 26 to clarify that funding can be used for direct costs that benefit students' postsecondary education, such as information technology, program startups, and program enhancements to meet current industry standards.
2. TXHEPC supports the development of policies that provide a streamlined process for institutions of higher education to offer programs in TDCJ facilities regardless of the institution's service area.
3. TXHEPC supports the development of policies that would allow students in Prison Education Programs to work as tutors, mentors, peer advisors and similar roles under the federal work-study program. Students would earn the same wages as college students who are not incarcerated, and wages could be designated for the payment of fines, restitution, child support and reimbursement to the state for reasonable daily living costs as specified in policy.
4. TXHEPC supports the development of policies that would allow students in the Prison Education Program to work remotely for pre-screened employers in the commercial, public, and non-profit sectors. Students would earn the same wages as employees in similar roles who are not incarcerated, and wages could be designated for the payment of fines, restitution, child support and reimbursement to the state for reasonable daily living costs as specified in policy. Authentic work experience would improve the employability of the person after they are released.
5. TXHEPC supports the development of policies that would provide written job descriptions and regular performance reviews for students during and after the completion of their prison education programs who are working for TDCJ or Texas Correctional Industries in order to document their work experience for their resumes and improve their employability after they are released.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas Walcerz, Chair, Texas Higher Education in Prison Consortium  
Representing: Alvin Community College; Amarillo Community College; Central Texas College;  
Clarendon College; Dallas College; Lamar State College Port Arthur; Lee College; Texarkana  
College; Texas Women's University; Trinity Valley Community College; University of Houston  
Clear Lake; and Western Texas College.