



DENTON COUNTY JUVENILE PROBATION

1000 SOUTH MAIN STREET, DENTON, TEXAS 76201

Memorandum

To: Texas Sunset Advisory Commission

From: Peggy Fox -Director Juvenile Probation *PF*
Ken Metcalf - Assistant Director *KM*

Cc: Senator Craig Estes

Date: November 24, 2008

Re: Re: Staff recommendation to abolish the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Texas Youth Commission and transfer their functions to a newly created agency, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

The Sunset Advisory Commission appropriately and understandably recognizes the need for an efficient and seamless juvenile justice system. We concur with these objectives. However, it is our position that efficiency and seamlessness can best be addressed by the State requiring their TJPC and TYC administrators to address these issues. The recent management problems at TYC call for cautious and prudent re-modeling of that agency, rather than massive and disruptive restructuring of not one, but two agencies. The roles of TJPC and TYC are very different. TJPC serves counties by providing funding, guidance, and compliance for uniform standards and treatment of youth. TYC hires staff that provide institutional and parole services to youth that are determined not to be appropriate for the TJPC system. It is our concern that creating one agency with two distinct roles will harm the success of TJPC and the counties it serves.

It is our recommendation that the executive administrators of both Commissions should develop and jointly present specific proposals this legislative session addressing the Sunset Commission's concerns. Specifically, Denton County Juvenile Probation would like to see the following addressed:

- Uniform standards.
- Shared programs and software system for tracking, training and certification of officers.
- Statewide software system (JCMS) to include TJPC, TYC, and DPS.
- Services to juveniles with severe mental health needs.
- Joint research projects.