



Legislative Priorities for the 82nd Texas Legislature

Adequately Fund Services

Before cutting services in juvenile justice or other human services, use all of the Rainy Day Fund, maximize use of available federal funding, and create new sources of revenue.

Create a Positive School Environment

- Require school districts to implement school-wide Positive Behavioral Supports.
- Require TEA to collect data on school ticketing and arrests and to make school disciplinary data publicly available so that districts may assess how they compare to other school districts.
- Require school districts that disproportionately refer students of color or special education students to develop and implement a remediation plan.
- Eliminate “serious or persistent misbehavior” in a DAEP as grounds for discretionary expulsion and referral to juvenile court as a Child in Need of Supervision (CINS) offense.
- Require schools to train School Resource Officers (SRO) and other personnel about mental health and disabilities, and to publicly report physical restraints.
- Limit ticketing at school as much as possible, redirecting revenue from remaining tickets away from police departments towards youth programs.
- Require school districts to distribute the student code of conduct handbook to parents.
- Address truancy in a way that promotes school engagement and strengthens families.

Strengthen Homes and Communities

- Expand programs that foster positive youth development and community involvement.
- Maintain community corrections funding and increase the impact of this investment by requiring that communities use strategies proven to be effective.
- Encourage probation departments to use probation-based diversion strategies, such as the Front End Diversion with specialized officer certification that includes motivational interviewing.
- Divert first-time and status offenders from further involvement using research-informed practices.
- Invest in practices that help youth succeed after juvenile justice involvement.

Increase the Courts’ Effectiveness

- Improve legal representation in municipal, juvenile, and criminal proceedings by providing for the early appointment of counsel for children who require it and ensuring continuity in their representation during proceedings against them.
- Improve training standards for judges and attorneys in municipal, criminal, and juvenile proceedings regarding mental health and intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Reduce the long-term, negative impact of criminal justice involvement on a youth’s future.

Ensure Safe Youth Facilities

- Amend policies regarding youth certified to stand trial as an adult by housing them in juvenile facilities and making adult certification offense and opportunities for judicial review consistent with those of determinate sentenced youth.
- Give judges additional tools to use with offenders aged 19-21.
- Support enhanced training for professionals who work with youth, including trauma-informed care and positive youth development.
- Continue monitoring and supporting Texas Youth Commission reforms begun in 2007.
- Ensure that all facilities—county, state, and contract—that house youth have adequate conditions of confinement and appropriate services.



**Our Organization Supports the Texas Juvenile Justice Roundtable's Legislative
Priorities for the 82nd Texas Legislature**

Name of Organization: _____

My organization is: Statewide _____ Local/Regional _____

Contact Person: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Signature: _____

(Authorized to sign for your organization)

Questions? Please e-mail Jodie Smith at jsmith@txchildren.org

Return this signed form:

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By Mail:

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The [Texas Juvenile Justice Roundtable's](#) mission is to create an effective juvenile justice system that practices prevention and rehabilitation and offers opportunities for youth to succeed, thereby supporting strong and safe communities.

Convened and coordinated by [Texans Care For Children](#) and the [Juvenile Law Section of the State Bar of Texas](#), the Roundtable meets monthly at the Texans Care for Children office in Austin. For more information, please contact Jodie Smith at jsmith@txchildren.org.