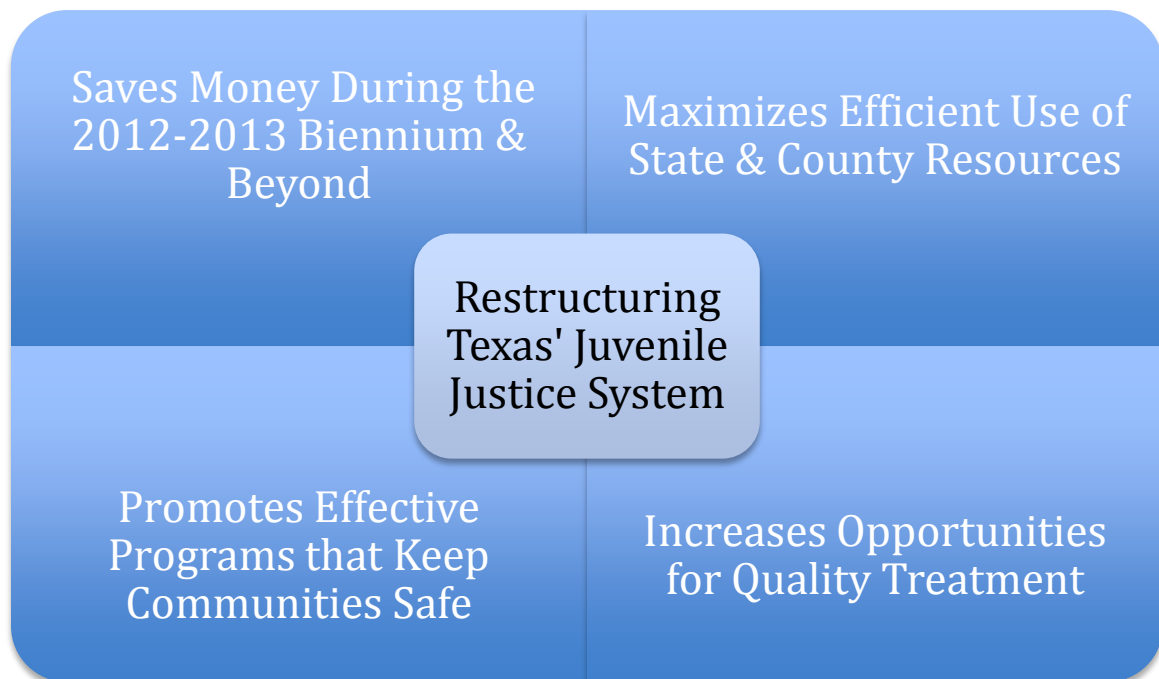


Restructuring Texas' Juvenile Justice System

Saving Money, Saving Communities & Saving Youth

Texas Appleseed, Advocacy, Incorporated, the National Center for Youth Law & the Center for Public Representation



Why Restructure the Juvenile System Now?

- TYC & TJPC are both under Sunset review this session, requiring consideration of whether a different structure will better serve the state.
- The State's budget deficit requires thoughtful consideration of the most efficient and effective use of resources.
- Successful reform measures enacted during the 2007 & 2009 legislative sessions have created the opportunity for restructuring by significantly reducing the population in TYC facilities and increasing capacity for more cost-effective treatment at the county level.
- Today's reliance on inappropriate TYC facilities continues to produce poor results, with high recidivism rates underscoring the need for more effective programming.

Hasn't the State already identified savings without merging TYC & TJPC?

HB 1 / SB 1 – Two State Agencies	Restructuring – One State Agency
Budgets for TYC & TJPC each cut by approximately 20 percent, resulting in significant cuts to county-run programs that produce better results for less money.	Realignment allows money to be cut from top-heavy administration & costly and ineffective secure facilities, keeping funding for county services intact.
Probation cuts increase reliance on TYC facilities – driving up the population in TYC facilities along with costs to the state.	Maintaining funding for county programs means that where they can be safely served in the community, youth continue to be diverted away from expensive secure facilities.
Probation cuts will result in an additional 622 youth committed to TYC - causing overcrowding in state facilities and less effective treatment.	Restructuring allows new agency to divert more youth from state-run facilities, reducing population and reserving state facilities for youth who cannot be safely served in other settings.

The Clear Choice for the Legislature: Maintain Two Agencies with Slashed Budgets [OR](#) Streamline the System and Save Money.

The good news for the legislature is that **while the \$645 million proposed for the two juvenile justice agencies under HB 1 & SB 1 is not sufficient if we maintain the status quo, it is sufficient if the system is streamlined through restructuring.**

FTI Consulting, an international accounting firm, provided a pro bono analysis of the cost-savings represented by restructuring for Texas Appleseed and its partners. FTI's analysis included an in-depth look at costs associated with the current structure and concluded that restructuring the system could save substantially more than maintaining the status-quo. In fact, restructuring will save the state more money in both the short-term and long-term than the budget cuts proposed in HB 1 & SB 1.

- ❖ Current Cost of Two Agencies (2010-11 Biennium): \$788,287,916
- ❖ Cost of One Agency 2012-13 Biennium (FTI Analysis): \$645,000,000

Immediate Savings from Restructuring = \$143,287,916

These savings are achieved in two areas: cuts in administrative personnel, and reduction in the number of state-run, secure facilities. Under the Restructuring plan, up to five secure facilities would be phased out over the biennium. State-run facilities would be reserved for youth who cannot be safely treated in community-based or county-run programs.

Aren't two agencies better than one?

The difference between the HB 1/SB 1 proposal and the FTI Analysis is that the House & Senate proposals simply cut the budgets of the two agencies, without considering the effect on programming. The FTI analysis instead looked at both agencies' budgets and identified efficiencies and savings, without compromising programming. **Simply put, running one agency represents efficiencies and savings that can be put back into programming for youth, so that the State saves money and youth receive effective treatment.**

Alternatively, maintaining the status quo and simply cutting budgets will drive up costs in the long run, and detrimentally affect youth. TYC and TJPC acknowledge the negative impact of cutting their budgets: TJPC projects that a cut in their budget of the size recommended by HB 1 / SB 1 would result in an additional 622 youth

placed in TYC facilities. Yet, the cut to TYC's budget – which requires closure of up to 3 facilities and the elimination of 500 jobs – does not account for any increase in capacity. *In their LAR, TYC notes, "...increased population at the remaining facilities would put smaller therapeutic treatment and educational environments at risk."* **A plan that simply cuts the budgets of the two agencies will set back the significant reform efforts that the Legislature's extraordinary leadership put into place in 2007 & 2009.**

Would Restructuring keep communities safe?

Restructuring will keep communities safer than maintaining the status quo.

Despite significant reforms, TYC still shows a high recidivism rate. This means youth return to their communities only to reoffend. Restructuring will allow the state to create a true continuum of effective programming – from community-based programming for youth who can safely remain in their homes, to more intensive programming in the youth's home county, to secure facilities run by the state.

Some of the most effective juvenile justice programs are the least expensive. However, in a top-heavy system dominated by expensive facilities, communities do not have the resources to invest in these cost-effective programs. Restructuring would emphasize a continuum of care that ensures communities are kept safe both in the short run – while youth are being rehabilitated – and in the long run, by investing in effective programs that return youth to their homes ready to be law-abiding citizens. Texas has seen the success of these programs through money invested in the Community Correction Diversion Program (Grant C) by the 2009 legislature. **Grant C programs reduced commitments to TYC by 30 percent, with only a handful of youth receiving treatment through these programs subsequently committed to TYC.**

In the end, if budget cuts result in ineffective programming, it is communities that will pay the price when youth return without being rehabilitated.

Will Restructuring be good for youth?

Restructuring will be better for kids than maintaining the status quo. Building a continuum of care – reserving secure facilities for only those youth who cannot be safely treated in the community – provides for quality treatment. Restructuring would:

- Allow Texas to maintain an effective level of services for youth by decreasing reliance on inappropriate and costly facilities;
- Create a full continuum of community-based county programs that have been proven effective in Texas and elsewhere;
- Ensure youth stay connected to family and education.