

Probation Funding

The Texas Catholic Conference **supports increased funding for community supervision and parole** divisions of the TDCJ, including funding for the training and salaries of officers in those areas.

Christians are asked to see Jesus in the face of everyone, including both victims and offenders. Through the lens of solidarity, those who commit crimes and are hurt by crime are not issues or problems; they are sisters and brothers, members of one human family. Solidarity calls us to insist on responsibility and seek alternatives that do not simply punish, but rehabilitate, heal, and restore. (*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*).

A Texas Bishop Speaks:

"Serving as an officer in our state's criminal justice system can be physically, emotionally, and spiritually draining. These officers need fair pay and regular training to refresh their skills and attitudes in the face of such difficult work."



-Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel, Diocese of Dallas

Church Teaching

- ★ Renewed emphasis should be placed on parole and probation systems as alternatives to incarceration, especially for non-violent offenders. Freeing up prison construction money to bolster these systems should be a top priority. Abandoning the parole system, as some states have done, combined with the absence of a clear commitment to rehabilitation programs within prisons, turns prisons into warehouses where inmates grow old, without hope, their lives wasted. (*USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*)
- ★ According to God's plan, all must play their part in helping to build a better society. Obviously, this includes making a great effort in the area of crime prevention. In spite of everything criminal actions are committed. For all to play their part in building the common good they must work, in the measure of their competence, to ensure that prisoners have the means to redeem themselves, both as individuals and in their relations with society. Such a process is based on growth in the sense of responsibility. None of this should be considered utopian. Those who are in a position to do so must strive to incorporate these aims in the legal system. (*Pope John Paul II, Message for Day of Jubilee for Prisoners*)
- ★ A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. Remuneration for work should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural, and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2434*)

Resources

- ★ **Community Justice Assistance Division** Texas Department of Criminal Justice (www.tdcj.state.tx.us/cjad/cjad-home.htm)
- ★ **Parole Division** Texas Department of Criminal Justice (www.tdcj.state.tx.us/parole/parole-home.htm) **Restore Justice** offers a place of compassion and assistance, resources and services and educational information for anyone who is affected by crime (www.RestoreJustice.com)
- ★ **American Probation and Parole Association** (www.appa-net.org)

Community Supervision and Parole Funding

The Texas Catholic Conference supports a view of criminal justice reform that includes ministering to offenders and aiding them in rehabilitation, healing, and eventual restoration to society. Both the Parole and Community Supervision divisions of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice play vital roles in the eventual restoration of offenders to society. We support additional funding for training, as well as salary increases, for parole and community supervision officers.

Overview of Texas Community Supervision (Adult Probation)ⁱ

Texas Department of Criminal Justice Community Justice Assistance Division (TDCJ-CJAD) administers community supervision, or adult probation, in Texas. The 71st Texas Legislature changed the term adult probation to community supervision in 1989. The public often confuses the terms community supervision (probation) and parole. Although both systems supervise convicted offenders and offer similar sanctions and rehabilitation programs, their functions are quite different:

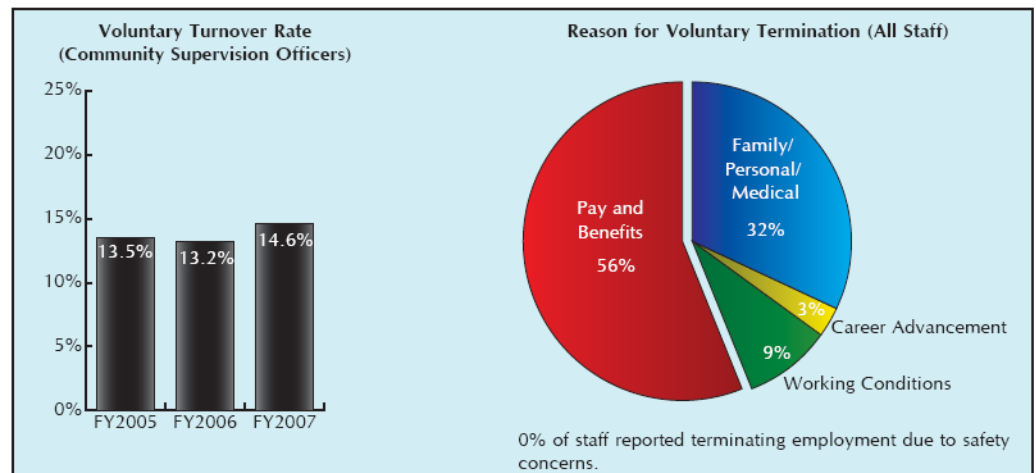
- Offenders on *community supervision* serve their sentences in the community. They are sentenced by local county-courts-at-law and district judges.
- Offenders are eligible for *parole* after they are released from prison.

Texas Department of Criminal Justice Parole Divisionⁱⁱ

The mission of the Parole Division is to promote public safety and positive offender change through effective supervision, programs, and services. According to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, parole officer work involves supervising pre-parole investigations and case review processing, conducting case analyses, coordinating case assignments, reviewing parole recommendations, formalizing special reports and the parole release plan, and training and supervising others.

Turnover Rates

High levels of voluntary turnover by probation officers and direct care staff in Texas Community Supervision and Corrections Departments (CSCDs) have contributed to unstable caseload sizes, inexperienced staff, training issues, decreased quality of supervision, and lower staff morale. For Community Supervision Officers and other CSCD direct care staff, pay satisfaction is one of the strongest underlying causes of high turnover intention in Texas probation (see chart right).ⁱⁱⁱ



Parole Officers receive an annual salary of \$33,406 to \$37,635 and Parole Officer Supervisor annual salaries range from \$37,635 to \$42,521.^{iv} While wages for CSCDs and Parole Officers are higher than the minimum wage, the Texas Catholic Conference believes that these are unjustly low wages with regard to their work and contributes to the high turnover rate.

(Last updated August 16, 2010, 82nd Legislative Session)

ⁱ "Community Justice Assistance Division." [Texas Department of Criminal Justice](http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/cjad/cjad-home.htm). 26 July 2010. <www.tdcj.state.tx.us/cjad/cjad-home.htm>.

ⁱⁱ "Parole Division." [Texas Department of Criminal Justice](http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/parole/parole-home.htm). 26 July 2010. <www.tdcj.state.tx.us/parole/parole-home.htm>.

ⁱⁱⁱ *2008 Turnover Survey*. Rep. Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Community Justice Assistance Division. Web. <www.tdcj.state.tx.us/publications/cjad/2008%20Turnover%20Survey%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>.

^{iv} "TDCJ Parole Officer Career Ladder Effective September 1, 2009." [Texas Department of Criminal Justice](http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/vacancy/hr-home/posalary.html). Web. 16 Aug. 2010. <<http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/vacancy/hr-home/posalary.html>>.

The Texas Catholic Conference (TCC) is the association of the 15 Roman Catholic dioceses of the State of Texas, and is the Official Public Policy Voice of the Catholic Bishops of Texas.

Andrew Rivas, Executive Director • Jennifer Carr Allmon, Associate Director • Margaret McGettrick, Education Director