



LEGISLATIVE POLICY STATEMENT

Tarrant County Commissioners Court

SUBJECT: Ex-Offender Reintegration and Recidivism Reduction

DATE: September 30, 2008

COURT ORDER NO. 104043

Annual release records denote that a total of over 6,000 formerly incarcerated persons return to Tarrant County from confinement within the correctional facilities of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Research literature regarding recidivism suggests that many, if not most, formerly incarcerated persons are highly likely to be rearrested for a new offense within three years of release from incarceration. Studies examining the causes for high recidivism conclude that people leaving incarceration typically share a common profile that is characterized by acute deficits in education, social skills, employment, housing, health, formal support systems and informal support networks. The Tarrant County Reentry Initiative aims to prevent recidivism by specifically targeting and addressing the needs of the reentry population returning to Tarrant County. It is understood that merely providing services and support for the reentry population is not a panacea. Legislative changes may be necessary, together with changes in policies and practices that will facilitate the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated persons back into our community. The successful implementation of the Tarrant County Re-entry Initiative and its programs may be expected to afford the residents of Tarrant County tax savings through a reduction in the jail population and costs associated with prisoner housing, and longer-term advantages and savings from a decreased demand on the public health system, and an increase in family well-being.

THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF TARRANT COUNTY STRONGLY SUPPORTS LEGISLATION THAT WILL ADDRESS THE REENTRY OF FORMERLY INCARCERATED PERSONS INTO SOCIETY BY ASSISTING IN THE HEALTH, HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT OF SUCH PERSONS, THEREBY REDUCING THE RATE OF RECIDIVISM AND THE COST TO THE TAXPAYERS.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, WE HAVE HEREUNTO SET OUR HANDS AND CAUSED THE GREAT SEAL OF TARRANT COUNTY TO BE AFFIXED THIS 30TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2008.


B. Glen Whitley
County Judge


Roy C. Brooks
Commissioner, Precinct 1


Marti VanRavenswaay
Commissioner, Precinct 2


Gary Fickes
Commissioner, Precinct 3


J.D. Johnson
Commissioner, Precinct 4