

## Community Supervision and Parole Funding

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. (*USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*)

### Church teaching

- ★ 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](http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/cjad/cjad-home.htm))
- ★ **Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice** (USCCB) ([www.usccb.org/sdwp/criminal.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/criminal.shtml))
- ★ **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](http://www.RestoreJustice.com))
- ★ **American Probation and Parole Association** ([www.appa-net.org/](http://www.appa-net.org/))  
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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 Probation divisions of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice play vital roles in the eventual restoration of offenders to society. We support additional funding to aid in their training, as well as salary increases for parole and community supervision officers.

## Overview of Texas Community Supervision (Adult Probation)<sup>i</sup>

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.

More than 440,000 offenders are on community supervision in Texas; approximately 243,000 felons and 200,000 misdemeanants. TDCJ-CJAD does not work directly with offenders; rather, it works with the community supervision and corrections departments or CSCDs, which supervise the offenders.

The division's work includes:

- Tracking the performance of community supervision departments
- Monitoring and reviewing supervision department budgets
- Distributing state funding to the departments
- Enforcing community supervision standards
- Giving departments administrative and technical help
- Training and certifying community supervision officers

## Texas Department of Criminal Justice Parole Division<sup>ii</sup>

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 parole release plan, and training and supervising others. In addition, parole officers are expected to coordinate with other departments and divisions of the agency and with outside agencies ensuring cooperation and continuity of services, prepares and maintains records and reports, perform, criminal information searches, and travel to local offices, county jails, private prisons, and agency units.

Parole Officers receive an annual salary of \$32,276.88 to \$34,209.72 and Parole Officer Supervisor annual salaries range from \$36,363 to \$46,473.48. While these wages are higher than the minimum wage, the Texas Catholic Conference believes that parole officers receive unjustly low wages with regard to their work.

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<sup>i</sup> "Community Justice Assistance Division." Texas Department of Criminal Justice. 20 June 2008. <<http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/cjad/cjad-home.htm>>.

<sup>ii</sup> "Parole Division." Texas Department of Criminal Justice. 25 July 2008. <<http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/parole/parole-home.htm>>.