

We, the undersigned organizations encourage lawmakers to close the Dawson State Jail. The facility has a track record of poor management, and closure would save state money without undermining the capacity of the TDCJ prison system.

Dawson State Jail, situated on prime real estate in the center of Dallas, is currently putting incarcerated people at risk with poor conditions and creating liability for the state of Texas with poor management. Recent media accounts of inadequate medical care and rash of preventable deaths at the Dawson State Jail illustrate problems at this facility. In the last year, reports have surfaced of three incarcerated women who have died from ostensibly preventable causes and a premature infant lived for only four days after being delivered without medical personnel.<sup>1</sup> A 2012 health services audit shows that conditions at the facility are non-compliant with the contract in many areas.<sup>2</sup>

Private prisons and state jails in Texas have been found to have turnover rates that are four- to six-times higher than in public facilities.<sup>3</sup> High turnover rates can result in higher rates of violence that put both employees and incarcerated people at risk.

The Dawson State Jail currently holds approximately 1,400 women and 820 men and is operated by Corrections Corporation of America (CCA).<sup>4</sup> The state's contract ends on August 31, 2013.<sup>5</sup>

The state jail population has decreased from 14,387 in 2006 to 11,921 in 2011.<sup>6</sup> The state currently has about 10,000 empty prison beds, which could accommodate people currently incarcerated at Dawson State Jail if the facility were closed.<sup>7</sup>

Shutting down Dawson State Jail — an inefficient facility and frequent-violator of its contract with the state — is a practical and fiscally responsible measure for addressing the state's revenue shortfall during this legislative session.

### Texas Organizations

ACLU of Texas  
AFSCME Texas Correctional Employee's Council  
League of Women Voters Texas  
South Dallas Fair Park Connectional Alliance  
South Texas Civil Rights Project  
Texas Civil Rights Project  
Texas Criminal Justice Coalition

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<sup>1</sup> Allen, Ginger. "Premature Baby Dies at Dawson State Jail Without Medically Trained Personnel." CBS DWF. 10 July 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Dawson State Jail Facility Operational Review Audit, January 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Senate Committee on Criminal Justice Interim Report to the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature, December 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Numbers obtained through the TDCJ High Value Data Sets, November 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Contract between TDCJ and CCA, January 2011.

<sup>6</sup> TDCJ Annual Review 2006. TDCJ Annual Review 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Grissom, Brandi. "Whitmore, Employee Union Urge Prison Closures. The Texas Tribune. 4 December 2012.

Texas Impact  
Texas Inmate Families Association (TIFA)  
Texas Jail Project  
TSEU (Texas State Employees Union)  
Valley Movement for Human Rights – Brownsville

National Organizations

AFSCME  
American Civil Liberties Union  
Grassroots Leadership  
Human Rights Defense Center  
In The Public Interest  
Justice Policy Institute  
Justice Strategies  
Private Corrections Institute  
Private Corrections Working Group  
Southern Center for Human Rights  
The American Friends Service Committee  
The Sentencing Project  
YouthBuild USA, Inc.