



Placement into Texas' In-Prison Therapeutic Community Should Be Based on Clinical Assessment Criteria

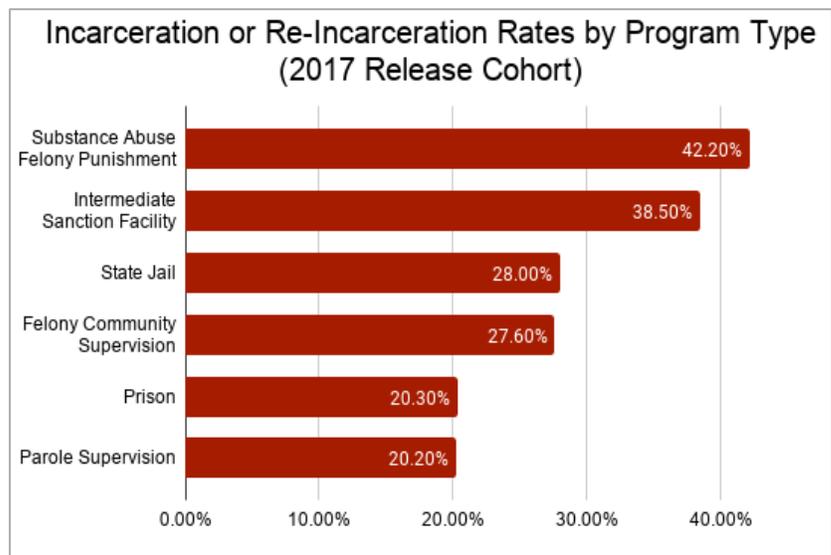
PLACEMENT INTO THE SAFFP PROGRAM VIA A PLEA AGREEMENT IS COSTLY AND INEFFECTIVE

Texas spends \$50 million per year on its Substance Abuse Felony Punishment (SAFFP) program,¹ the state's in-prison substance use treatment program for people at risk of probation or parole revocation due to repeated drug or alcohol use. However, the SAFFP program has a recidivism rate of 42.2% – higher than rates of (re)incarceration following other terms of supervision or incarceration.²

Currently, individuals can be placed into SAFFP programming via a plea agreement. In other words, the program services individuals who have not been clinically assessed for alcohol or substance use disorder(s). The lack of a standardized screening and selection process prior to SAFFP placement means that taxpayers are wasting money on resources for individuals who do not need this level or type of treatment.

KEY FACTS

- **There is no clinical assessment required for placement into the SAFFP program.** It is likely that its high recidivism rate is heightened by the placement of individuals who do not meet criteria for the type and level of treatment services being provided.
- The SAFFP program takes an individual anywhere from **9 to 12 months to complete** (6 to 9 months for the in-prison portion, and 3 or more months for aftercare).³ If individuals are not an appropriate fit for the program, it is unlikely they will successfully navigate this lengthy treatment process.
- A 2021 report by the state's Legislative Budget Board found that SAFFP programming has the **highest percentage of individuals who are incarcerated or re-incarcerated within three years of release** compared to felony community supervision, prison, state jail, intermediate sanction facilities, and parole supervision.⁴



COST-SAVING AND PUBLIC SAFETY-DRIVEN SOLUTION: SUPPORT HB 2791 BY REPRESENTATIVE JARVIS JOHNSON

HB 2791 only permits SAFFP program placement as part of a plea agreement if the judge finds that the person is a suitable candidate for treatment based on an established screening and assessment. This policy change will reduce the rate of misplacement into the program, as well as the corresponding misallocation of resources towards unnecessary treatment, in turn saving taxpayer dollars.

Citations on reverse.

Citations

¹ General Appropriations Act for the 2020-21 Biennium, Department of Criminal Justice, Strategy C.2.4, https://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Documents/GAA/General_Appropriations_Act_2020_2021.pdf.

² Legislative Budget Board (LBB), *Statewide Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recidivism and Revocation Rates*, January 2021, 6, https://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Documents/Publications/Policy_Report/6293_CJDA_Recidivism-Revocation.pdf.

³ Texas Department of Criminal Justice, *Rehabilitation Programs Division: Substance Use Treatment Program*, https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/rpd/substance_abuse.html.

⁴ LBB, *Statewide Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recidivism and Revocation Rates*.