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House Bill 2143

WRITTEN TESTIMONY, 2011

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present testimony in favor of H.B. 2143. The Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, as a member of the state's Reentry Task Force, strongly supports this bill because it will improve the reentry infrastructure in Texas and ultimately assist more individuals in accessing basic services that reduce rates of re-offending.

PROBLEM

This bill addresses two challenges facing the state's newly created Reentry Task Force:

- ***Current Membership of Reentry Task Force:*** Texas' statewide Reentry Task Force promotes increased collaboration and coordination among localized re-entry initiatives and state-level entities, specifically in efforts to help stakeholders minimize barriers that impact individuals' successful reintegration into Texas communities. However, the current membership of the Task Force does not specifically include representatives of **veterans organizations** or **faith-based organizations**, and it limits others interested in the successful reintegration of returning individuals to one organization.
- ***Task Force Reporting Difficulties:*** The Task Force is required to report its research findings to various members of the Legislature, including on family unity and participation efforts. This particular reporting element is quite difficult for the Task Force to undertake, as it potentially requires a study of thousands of returning individual's unification successes or challenges.

SOLUTION: SUPPORT H.B. 2143 BY REPRESENTATIVE TURNER

- **H.B. 2143 strengthens the membership of the state's Reentry Task Force** to include the Texas Veterans Commission and a faith-based organization. It also improves representation among the judiciary, and it allows other organizations, agencies, or individuals who advocate for or have significant interest in the successful reentry of returning individuals to participate as members.
- **H.B. 2143 streamlines Task Force reporting.** This bill cleans up current statutory language to ensure the Task Force will report to the Legislature on measurable outcomes of its activities and research, rather than use valuable resources in efforts to report on outcomes that cannot be quantified.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify in favor of this important bill. It is a smart policy that will further improve re-entry practices in Texas.