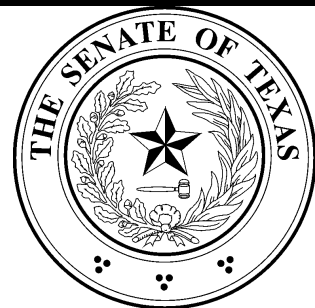


SENATOR
JOHN WHITMIRE
DISTRICT 15
NEWS RELEASE



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Whitmire Addresses Relationship Between Prison Capacity and Education

AUSTIN, Texas-- State Senator John Whitmire (D-Houston) who chairs the Senate Criminal Justice Committee is involved in discussions relating to prison capacity issues in Texas. Whitmire states, "We have sufficient capacity in housing offenders, but Texas must do a better job in treating these offenders with substance abuse issues."

Senator Whitmire is also discussing drivers of the prison population. The average inmate in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice has a sixth grade educational level, and a reported one-third of all high school students do not graduate. "There is a direct correlation between drop out rates and incarceration rates. If we do not address this problem now, we will later in our justice system."

Unfortunately the State spends an average of \$2.75 per student. This may help suburban schools with full enrollment, but does little to help inner city school districts with students that drop out in the 9th and 10th grades. The legislature must decide whether to spend needed resources to educate our children or to spend the money later in the criminal justice system. Unfortunately the prison system is full with dropouts who are drug and alcohol dependent. The State must spend the money to educate students and treat offenders in order to offset additional costs to address these issues in the long run.

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