

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Juvenile Justice & Family Issues
For HB 422

Compiled on: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 5:53 PM

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Hearing Date: March 22, 2023 10:30 AM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Nick Reininger, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
Guadalupe County Juvenile Services
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Juvenile Justice and Family Issues Committee Member

My name is Nick Reininger and I am the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer for Guadalupe County. First and foremost, I want to thank you for your efforts, support, and guidance to our field of juvenile justice in Texas. There are many important issues to consider this legislative session, and various perspectives to take into account when deciding the best path forward for pending legislation. Therefore, I am writing to offer written testimony on some of the bills appearing before your committee on March 22, 2023.

I would like to offer my full support for HB 422, allowing the Juvenile Court more flexibility concerning remote/virtual hearings. Guadalupe County operates a pre-adjudication detention facility with a rated capacity for 35 youth. The ability for our county to conduct detention hearings electronically from our detention facility has proven very effective, and is much safer than transporting multiple in-custody juveniles to a non-secure environment at the Courthouse. We also provide detention services to many other counties in the central Texas region as well as numerous other counties throughout the state. Most of our contract counties conduct virtual hearings with their Juvenile Courts remotely, saving on transportation time to and from our facility. Some of the juveniles that are placed in our detention facility are from counties several hours away, and conducting an in-person hearing could turn into a full day of travel, taxing resources and causing additional stress for the juvenile.