

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Homeland Security & Public Safety
For HB 1184

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 6:46 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: April 11, 2023 2:00 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Paul White, Sr. Judge, retired/TASC Legislative Committee Chair
Director and Legislative Chair of Texas Association of Specialty Courts
Lufkin, TX

The Board of Directors of the Texas Association of Specialty Courts unanimously supports HB 1184 as an aid in confirming the effectiveness of our courts in reducing recidivism of program participants. Recidivism is one of the most important measurements in evaluating program outcomes and an essential metric to rank programs for funding eligibility.

Although access to criminal history data should properly be limited, current restrictions in Texas make ongoing analysis of recidivism very labor intensive and cost prohibitive for many of our specialty courts, as well as restricts access to research projects funded only by State funds. HB 1184 amendments to the Government Code will allow greater access to the records and permits research by our courts funded through non-State grants or municipal or county funds. Additionally, the proposed changes still maintain a safeguard to this sensitive data, requiring DPS approval for access.

TASC respectfully encourages the Committee approval of HB 1184 in support of our mission to improve, expand and sustain the specialty court model throughout Texas. This bill will help us confirm the effectiveness of our programs in reducing recidivism of criminal offenders.

Devon Anderson, President/CEO
Justice Forward
Houston, TX

Justice Forward is a nonprofit that supports Specialty Court clients and graduates in Harris, Galveston and Fort Bend Counties. These courts will benefit from this change in the law. Fundamental to the effective operation of these courts is monitoring and evaluating outcomes. Accessing criminal history data is the foundation of determining the efficacy of these programs.