

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Youth Health & Safety, Select  
For HB 2687

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 12:27 PM

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Hearing Date: March 27, 2023 2:30 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Heather Bachhofer, Chief JPO  
Somervell County Juvenile Probation  
Glen Rose, TX

I am against this bill. Only because I think there needs to be more studied about the impact this will have on juvenile and adult probation departments.

Billie Bram, Chief Officer  
Wharton County Juvenile Probation  
Wharton, TX

The Juvenile Probation Departments are already diverting juveniles who are 12 and under away from the system by utilizing local resources and agencies to keep them out of the system per HB 1204 for referral to the local CRCG. I do not see a need for this as we are already doing it. This act would add another burden on the court systems that are already overwhelmed.

Kali Smith, Chief JPO  
Moore County Juvenile Probation  
DUMAS, TX

Honorable Representatives,

Thank you for your tireless work during this 88th Session at the Capital on behalf of the youth in your district and across the state of Texas.

House Bill 2687 proposes to change the juvenile age to 13 through 18 years of age. As a small department in the panhandle with a county population of 22,000, we get few referrals per year for juveniles ages 10-12. The referrals we receive collectively are significant. The offenses listed in HB 2687 have been received historically as referrals for 10–12-year-olds in our department:

Agg Assault w Deadly Weapon	5
Agg Assault Causes SBI	2
Agg Sexual Assault of Child	1
Arson	14
Indecency w Child Exposes	1
Indecency W child sexual contact	4
Indecent Exposure	1

The offenses below are referrals for ages 10-12 received that HB 2687 would not allow our local authorities address other than releasing to parents:

Assaultive in nature	70
Burglary of Building	26
Burglary of Habitation	23
Burglary of Vehicle/s	13
Cruelty to Animals	2
Deadly Conduct	5
Del Marij DFZ	2
Evading Arrest	7
Injury Elderly Person	1
Poss CS PG 2	3
Poss of Child Porn	2
Prohibited Sexual Conduct	3
Prohibited Weapons	2
Robbery	1
Sexual Assault Child	1
Terror Threat Fear Imm SBI	4
UUMV	7
Unl Carry Weapon	7

As you can see, our department and local stakeholders have dealt with several serious offenses from 10–12-year-olds. These are significant charges, sometimes the young offenders are running with older juveniles. There are better chances for the juvenile to reverse these behaviors if they are allowed to proceed through the local system, as shallowly as possible.

As to raising the upper age to 17, this would add to the already burdened caseloads of juvenile probation departments who can not detain our juveniles. If passed, the counties with detention facilities would be so full, they may never be able to accept contract juveniles, no matter the offense. Small departments such as ours across the state would have to release the offenders outlined in this bill for all ages, not just 10–12-year-olds. I ask that you consider not raising either end of the age at this time.

Sec. 54.021 as proposed to Waive Jurisdiction for Child under 13 Years of Age would increase the court docket unnecessarily. The juvenile probation departments are good at diverting youthful offenders ages 10-13 as it is. This would force a court hearing, the appointing of an attorney and add to the stress of the family and juvenile. If the case is worthy of diverting, Juvenile Probation Departments are already doing that in their efforts to keep juveniles out of the system. The local Judges, Juvenile Boards and other stakeholders already trust the probation departments to divert juveniles from court. This waver hearing would undo this

I ask that you consider these points as they apply to this bill and not support with its current writing. Thank you for your service to the youth this state

Taylor Trevino  
self - organizer  
Austin, TX

I urge the legislature to support this bill to keep more children out of the criminal justice system. Our children belong at home, at school, and in their community, not in jails that don't provide the nurture and rehabilitation that at-risk youth desperately need.