

Policy Brief | **Justice Issues**
Titus for Texas

OVERVIEW

I will always stand with the marginalized. Human flourishing is not for the wealthy or advantaged alone, but should be available to every single person regardless of age, disability, sexual orientation, class, etc. Justice issues are complex and nuanced, but fundamentally driving my philosophy is seeing equity spread across historic lines of prejudice. Particularly when it comes to criminal justice reform, racism, and sexual orientation, I believe we have much to do before we can claim equity in our communities.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Mass incarceration does not make us safer, is incredibly expensive, and disproportionately impacts people of color and the poor. I stand with the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) in their calls for reform. The United States possesses just 5% of the world's population, but 25% of the world's jailed population. Spending in our nation's jails exceeds \$80 billion. We've seen an over 1000% increase in the jailed population in the past four decades. The federal government devotes more money annually to funding prisons than it does to homelessness.

- Life sentences for juvenile offenders should be abolished.
- Three strikes laws should not apply to non-violent offenders.
- More than 65% of those serving life sentences today were guilty of nonviolent crimes. This should not be.
- A “blunt instrument of the drug war,” and an incredibly expensive approach (over \$32,000/year/prisoner), I believe mandatory minimum sentences should be removed.

In short, the modern criminal justice system is a burdensome and unsustainable enterprise in need of reform. This reform will save taxpayers money, be more justice oriented, and not compromise the safety of other citizens.

VOTING

The road to suffrage for every citizen has been long, and obstacles remain. To ensure that every person has safe, convenient access to cast their ballot I believe:

- Every major election should be a federal holiday. If the federal government will not act, then it should be declared a state holiday in Texas.

- Mail-in voting should be expanded. Concerns about fraud are overstated yet valid, but this should not be a deterrent. We can employ fail safes but expand mail-in voting so that it's available to anyone who needs it.
- I support the restoration of voting rights for convicted felons upon completion of their sentences.
- Texas holds one of the most restrictive Voter ID laws in the nation, and I am against this suppression. Over 11 million Americans can't access the necessary ID, and these laws should be reconsidered.
- I agree with [The Brennan Center](#) in advocating for both online voter registration and same day voter registration.

Bottom line, we don't have to choose between making voting more secure and making voting more accessible. We can do the hard work to accomplish both.

RACISM IN POLICING

In 2019, there were only twenty-seven days the entire year in which the police did not kill someone in America. In 2020, over 600 have been killed so far. These traumas occur disproportionately to black citizens. Accountability is rare. In 2015, over 1100 people were killed by police. Zero were charged with manslaughter or murder.

- I reject calls for defunding as a solution and believe more funding should be made available for departments. This funding should be used for additional training on mental health issues, de-escalation, and non-violent language.
- I believe body cameras should be required for every officer in Texas.
- No-knock warrants and qualified immunity should be reconsidered.
- The Breonna Taylor Act did not go far enough and I support the George Floyd Act as a legislative priority moving forward.
- I agree with the [Texas Justice Initiative](#) that more data and greater transparency are required.

In short, I believe that policing should be re-imagined and affirm a both/and path forward — one where police officers are better equipped and trained to do their jobs. They deserve additional resources and support at their disposal, and they also need to be held accountable for their mistakes.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

People being bought and sold like property is a grievous evil, and one we must continue to take legislative strides to combat. Texas has 313,000 victims and counting of this horrific industry.

- The fight must start upstream. The decriminalization of children working as prostitutes is a no-brainer. The Governor vetoed this bill, but it should be reconsidered.
- Texas must crack down on massage parlors, strip clubs, and other places where trafficked people are often housed and abused.
- While funding for victims of trafficking has increased in recent years, we still lack sufficient treatment centers for those rescued. Funding for at least five new centers in the next five years should be pursued.
- The foster-care-to-trafficking pipeline is no secret and, as such, the foster care system is still in need of reform. Urgently, more staff need to be hired to monitor children in foster care in the state of Texas.

In short, I stand with organizations like [United Against Human Trafficking](#) when I say that any legislation that reduces the number of Texas forced or coerced into slavery is one I would enthusiastically support.

LGBTQIA+ JUSTICE

I believe that every human being is deserving of equal civil rights under the law, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Texas is one of 27 states without protection for gay, lesbian, transgender, and queer individuals.

- I would support the efforts of [Equality Texas](#) in the 87th Legislative Session to pass comprehensive non-discrimination laws making it illegal for people to be fired, denied housing, because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- In Texas, gender identity and expression should be added to the hate crime laws already passed by the legislature
- Same sex couple should be treated the same way under the Rome & Juliet Law

In short, I will consistently stand against discrimination and support legislation that brings equity to the LGBT community.