

preserving the peace and public trust



HOUSTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Brian L. Swedberg - SHERIFF



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Mental Health in Juvenile Facilities

Mental health disorders are prevalent among juveniles, and even more so in juveniles in the justice system. The justice system relies more and more on jails to help meet their mental health needs and jails do not currently have the resources or funds to assist with these needs. Therefore, their needs aren't being met within the juvenile justice system or after their release from the justice system.

Juvenile facilities are seeing more and more youth in the justice system who need mental health services and the only way they can meet these needs is by increasing services. Juvenile facilities are unable to increase services without funding, or for smaller counties like Houston, have any mental health services available without additional funding. Some juveniles require 1:1 staffing ratio due to their mental health needs. Juvenile facilities need the funds to be able to hire social workers, mental health professionals, etc. to work strictly with juveniles in need of these services.

Juveniles in the justice system face mental health challenges, trauma related disorders and behavioral issues, which can be caused by adverse childhood experiences. If given funding for mental health services, it will help address the root cause of juvenile's mental health issues and provide treatment for them and their families. Mental health services in the juvenile justice system, along with continued care after release, can help them reintegrate back into society and reduce recidivism.

Therefore, Houston County JDC is in support of bill SF2546.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian L. Swedberg".

Sheriff Brian Swedberg