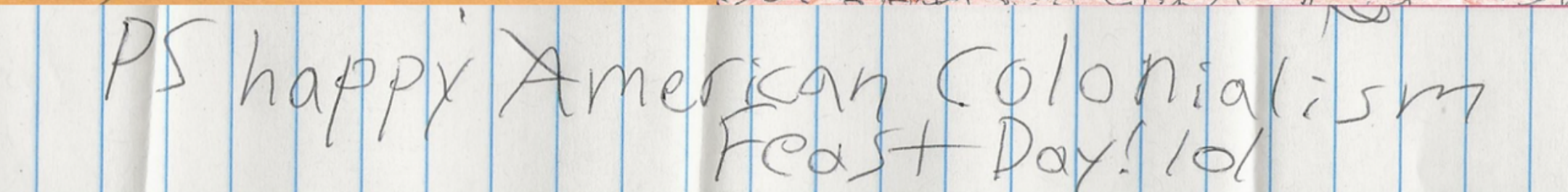
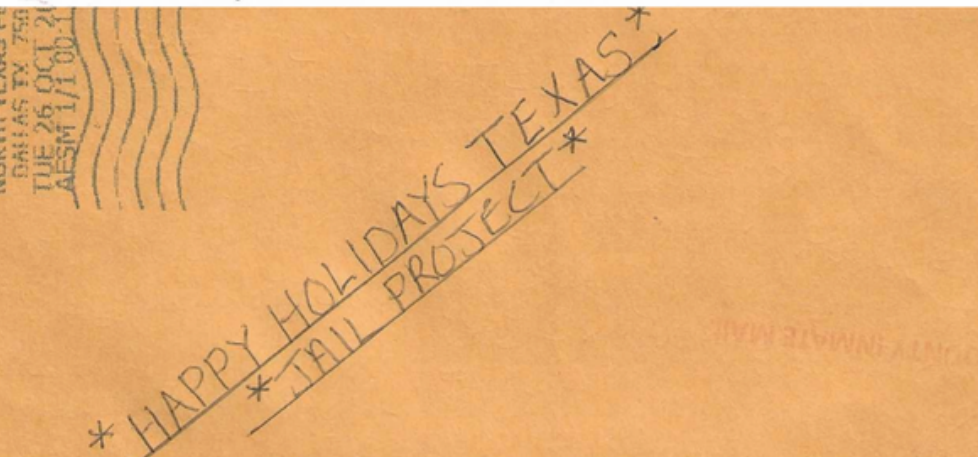
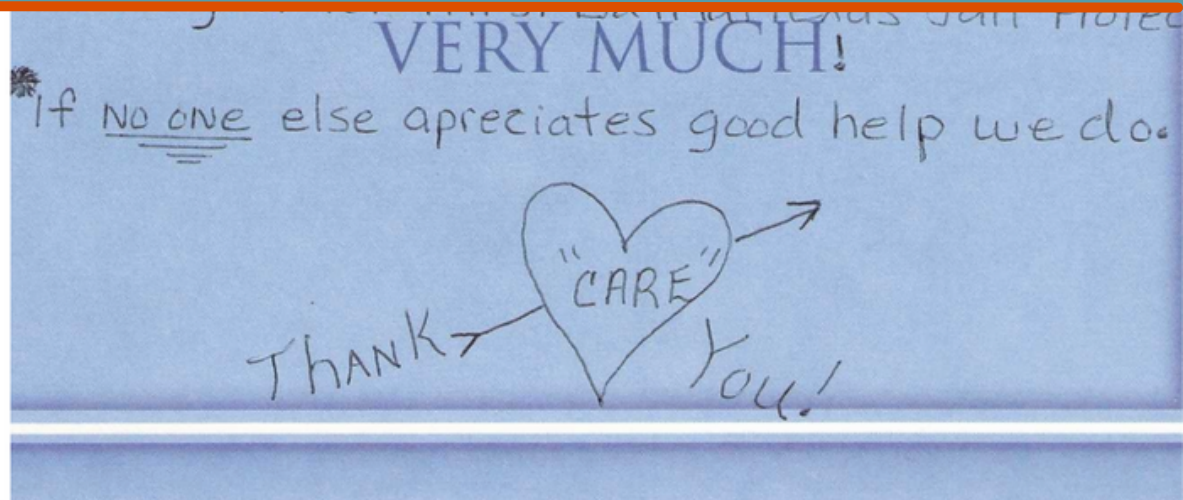


2021 Impact Report



texasjailproject.org

TEXAS
JAIL
PROJECT



The impact and importance of TJP's storytelling work cannot be exaggerated. On top of building trust and creating community with those directly impacted, TJP has also helped members of that community translate their experiences into advocacy, providing a new constituency to participate in the policy discussion and to hold local officials and stakeholders accountable. TJP's work telling these stories has also driven changes in local media practices, with local media outlets no longer willing to ignore the stories of those directly impacted as the cost of business for operating one of America's largest criminal justice systems. I cannot emphasize enough how this benefits everyone (including other nonprofit organizations) involved in the policy discussion at the local level. That TJP does all of this great work at a time where telling these stories comes with the real risk of being singled out and targeted by local elected officials only further cements their importance to discussions on mass incarceration across the entire state of Texas. I believe TJP to be one of the most effective organizations in the entire country at communicating the human costs of mass incarceration to the general public, and I cannot emphasize enough the importance of their work.

Jay Jenkins, Harris County Project Attorney



Our Work



Advocacy



Storytelling



Organizing



Policy



Advocacy

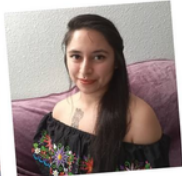


Tamera Hutcherson,
TEXAS JAIL PROJECT

Gabriela Barahona,
TEXAS JAIL PROJECT



Pamela Young,
UNITED FORT WORTH

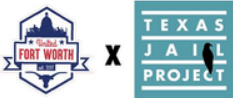


Gloria Mendoza Mendina,
UNITED FORT WORTH

Have you or your family been directly impacted by incarceration in Tarrant County jail? Are you a community member interested in learning about county jail advocacy and decarceration? **JOIN US!**

Register here to join by Zoom:
tinyurl.com/UFWxTJP
or watch on Facebook Live
@UnitedFortWorth or @texasjailproject.

AN INTRODUCTION TO COUNTY JAIL ADVOCACY IN TARRANT COUNTY



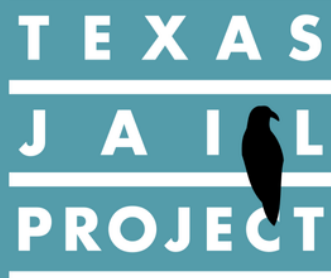
THURSDAY,
SEPTEMBER **30th**
7 - 8:30 P.M



Advocating

- Individual-level case intervention, crisis response, & participatory defense
- Democratizing information by aggregating and disseminating advocacy resources
- Disbursing monetary direct aid at scale to incarcerated people and their loved ones

TEXAS
JAIL
PROJECT



Again, thank you for your assistance in this matter. I cannot begin to tell you how great it feels to hear from my daughter and the tone in her voice after only being in custody for three weeks. And I know she has a long road ahead of her. But the feeling I got yesterday when she called me "Mom" and said "I love you" at the end of our telephone conversation was something every mother yearns to hear from their children. And because of her long addiction I haven't heard those words in well over six years. I truly hope for her sake and for the sake of her daughter whom I have been raising for the past six years that Amanda can see the light at the end of the tunnel and believe she is worth more than what she has put herself through.

Again, Dalila I cannot thank you enough for putting the gears in motion for my daughter.

Lisa Reynolds - Family member of incarcerated person



Robert Polodna and his wife, reunited after Texas Jail Project paid Robert's \$500 bond for allegedly stealing food for his family from Walmart

- 🐦 **Reunited** more than 47 individuals with their families through our revolving community bail fund in Tyler
- 🐦 Funded short-term housing to secure pretrial releases

TIME

Texas Jail Project: Aiming to “empower incarcerated people in county jails by lifting their voices through stories, testimonies, and community building,” the Texas Jail Project has received reports from detainees in county jails allegedly without power or running water and is accepting donations to help pay for detainee’s phone calls and commissary purchases.

Disbursed over \$100,000 cash in **Direct Aid** to recently incarcerated folks and their loved ones for rent, utilities, transportation, medical and other expenses

\$53.00 Paid

Thanks for using Correct Solutions. Your deposit was successful.

Below is your order summary.

You sent \$1,050.00 USD to

YOUR NOTE TO

“ Winter storm direct aid from Texas Jail Project. Hidalgo county. Hope this provides some relief to your family. Please take care. ”

Transaction Number	
Customer	Texas Jail Project
Recipient	
Amount to Recipient (USD)	\$100.00
JailATM.com Fees (USD)	\$10.00
Total Transaction Amount (USD)	\$110.00

Order Information

Deposit

Date: 2/21/2021

Item | Price

Web Deposit | \$112.00

Facility: Bowie County Detention Center

Inmate:

Subtotal: \$100.00

Processing Fee: \$12.00

Grand Total: \$112.00

Amount Paid: \$112.00

Order Balance: \$0.00

Trans. Amount:	\$100.00
Handling Charge:	\$8.95
Agency Charge:	\$0.00

Recipient Name:

Inmate ID:

Service: Trust

Facility: Harris County TX

Payer Name:

Recipient Amount: \$100.00

Applicable Transaction and Payment Fee: \$8.50

Total Amount Charged to your Credit Card: \$108.50

Receipt Number:

You sent \$1,000.00 USD to

YOUR NOTE TO

“ Winter Storm Direct Aid from Texas Jail Project to For bills and phone calls to stay in touch ith wife in Howard county jail. We hope this helps. Please take care and stay safe. ”

TEXAS JAIL

🐦 Raised more than \$50,000 in one week to fund water, food, and commissary deposits for our incarcerated community



Scott Hechinger ✓ @ScottHech · Feb 17, 2021

...

If you're moved to help, please visit [@TxJailProject](#). They are a trusted & extraordinary organization. Work closely with them. Since yesterday, deposited \$1500 on commissary. Please give here:



Scott Hechinger ✓

@ScottHech

...

🌟 The cruelty continues. What the Texas snow & power outages mean for incarcerated people. Just in from a man caged pretrial in Harris County:

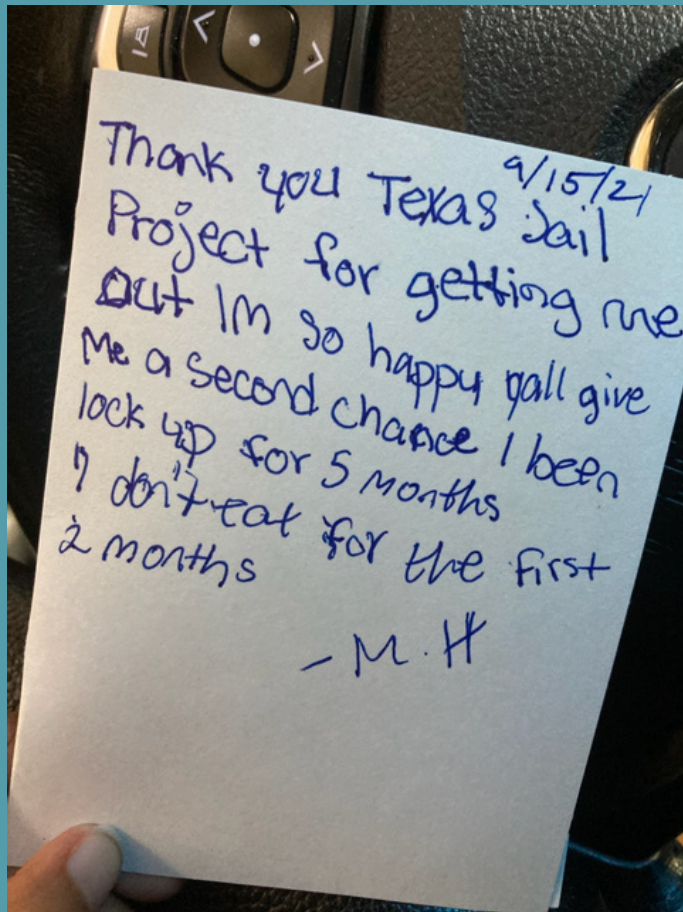
"We don't have any running water anymore. No drinking water. Rations are now half measures. Tensions are running high here."

1:37 PM · Feb 17, 2021

637 Retweets 61 Quotes 1,293 Likes 24 Bookmarks



We facilitated pretrial diversion of 4 women from Smith county to Santa Maria, Houston.



- We recorded over 1200 phone interviews, jail emails, and letters from incarcerated individuals and their loved ones
- We received and responded to nearly 500 emails and phone calls on our HelpLine





Secured gender affirming medicine for trans people in jail



Overtured Conviction - Collaborated with the Bexar county public defender on a singular civil rights abuse case, to overturn conviction of a gender fluid person with severe developmental disability who was incarcerated in Bexar county jail.



"Our office represented a young trans woman who suffered from a severe intellectual disability. Despite having severe IDD an attorney not affiliated with our office allowed her to plea guilty to an offense despite being clearly incompetent. She was incarcerated from 2014 to 2019 bouncing between competency restoration and county jail. Thanks to the work of Texas Jail Project and Krish Gundu who brought this young woman's plight to our attention, we were able to file a writ to reverse her conviction and secure in-patient treatment in a facility that was more appropriate for her needs."

- Michael Young, ex-Chief Public Defender, Bexar County

- Helped three families secure guardianship for babies born while their parent is incarcerated pretrial





Community member Rachel Teniente with grandbaby Nyla. TJP secured Rachel's daughter's release from jail during pregnancy in 2021



you can also quote on there that the TJP saved my daughter and my grandchildren life by helping my daughter. Vanessa is in a better place in life now & works full time.

R



My name is Krystal Hernandez. My sister was incarcerated in the Taylor County Jail here in Abilene, Tx during her pregnancy with my nephew. Texas Jail Project advocated for her as the conditions were awful and she was not getting the required nutrition a pregnant woman needs. Texas Jail Project not only advocated for her but kept me informed so I could as well. They helped with legal issues and offered solutions for her situation to get her the help she needed at the time. These ladies truly care about people and fight for these women and their families when we/they do not have the knowledge of the rules and regulations we trust these state facilities to uphold and fail to! If it had not been for Texas Jail Project my sister and one unborn nephew's story could have turned out extremely different! My sister was continually losing weight, deprived of the extra nutrients she needed and was not given her prescribed medications. Texas Jail Project came in and got this situation rectified to where we now have a healthy baby! Thank you so much for all your hard work and vast knowledge to make things turn out the way they did! Thank you for speaking up for those who can't and do not know how to make the powerful people listen! We are truly blessed to have found Texas Jail Project!! Y'all really care about people and do not pass judgment on women who have made mistakes and want to be better! Thank you for helping her turn her life around!!

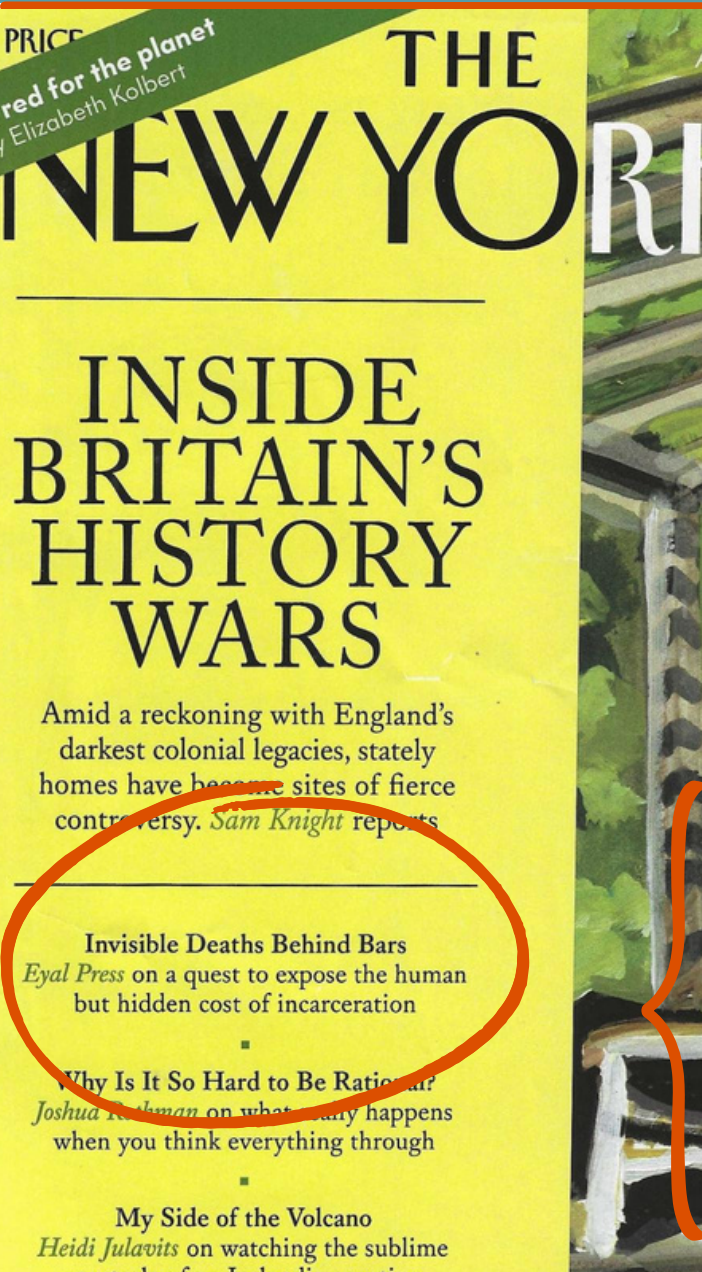
Krystal Hernandez - Family member of incarcerated person



Krystal Hernandez's sister and nephew. We secured prenatal care and release from abusive conditions in Taylor county jail. Her story was covered in this article in [The Appeal](#)



Storytelling



Few of these deaths made the news, which does not surprise Krishnaveni Gundu, a founder and the executive director of the Texas Jail Project, which exposes civil-rights violations in the state's jails. Between 2009 and this past May, she told me, there were a hundred and forty-three deaths in a single facility that her group monitors: the Harris County jail, where upward of eighty per cent of the people in custody are pre-trial detainees. "To put that in perspective, the *whole* state of Texas has executed a hundred and fifty-two people in the same time period," she said. We spoke on May 25th, the first anniversary of the death of George Floyd. It had been a hard day, Gundu said, both because it brought back memories of Floyd's murder and because it made her think about "all these people dying in jails that nobody's talking about." In the middle of our conversation, which took place over Zoom, Gundu's cell phone started buzzing. The caller was LaRhonda Biggles, whose twenty-three-year-old son, Jaquarea, had been beaten to death by guards at the Harris County jail in February. (Jaquarea, who died of brain bleed and blunt-force trauma, was punched so hard that the metal grill on his teeth was dislodged; it was later found by another detainee.) Biggles, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement,



Storytelling

- Collaborating with incarcerated communities on press interviews, op-eds, writing workshops, testimonials, and storytelling projects
- Catalyzing narrative change to redefine public safety by pitching, placing, and framing media coverage

shifting the narrative





“I would not have had the courage to advocate for my son if it weren’t for you holding my hand. Us folk here in the country...we don’t have much...we don’t have the money to find him help. We live on disability. If it weren’t for you telling me what to do every step of the way, he might have died in that jail. You gave me hope! He’s home safe thanks to you!”

Smith County mother, March, 2020





*“Ustedes son Ángeles que
Dios ha puesto en nuestras
vidas de verdad.”*

*[You are angels that God
has truly put in our lives.]*

Dallas County mother, 2020.



“The doctor took him off of suicide watch. Thank you for everything and my fiancé tells me to tell you thank you and that he really appreciates what you’re doing for him.”

Victoria County fiancé, 2020.



The logo for Mother Jones, featuring the text "Mother Jones" in white on an orange rectangular background.The logo for Arnold Ventures, featuring a blue circle with a white "AV" monogram and the text "Arnold Ventures" in black to its right.The logo for The Washington Post, featuring the text "The Washington Post" in a black, serif font.The logo for CNN, featuring the letters "CNN" in a stylized, red, blocky font.The logo for the Dallas Observer, featuring the word "DALLAS" in small red letters above the word "Observer" in a large, red, sans-serif font.The logo for The Texas Tribune, featuring a yellow speech bubble with a white star inside, and the text "THE TEXAS TRIBUNE" in black to its right.The logo for HuffPost, featuring the word "HUFFPOST" in white, bold, sans-serif font with green vertical bars on either side, set against a black background.The logo for CBS, featuring the CBS eye symbol in black and the letters "CBS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.The logo for Axios, featuring a blue stylized "A" followed by the word "XIOS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.The logo for NPR, featuring the letters "n", "p", and "r" in white, each inside a colored square (red, black, and blue respectively).The logo for The Marshall Project, featuring a stylized graphic of vertical bars of varying heights to the left of the text "The Marshall Project" in a black, sans-serif font.The logo for D Magazine, featuring a large, red, stylized letter "D" inside a red square, with the text "DMAGAZINE.COM" in small black letters below it.The logo for the Texas Observer, featuring a white silhouette of the state of Texas inside a black square, followed by the word "OBSERVER" in white, bold, sans-serif font on a red background.The logo for The Appeal, featuring the words "THE APPEAL" in a bold, black, sans-serif font inside a white rectangular box with a thick orange border.The logo for NBC News, featuring the NBC peacock logo with its colorful feathers above the text "NBC NEWS" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

🦋 We contributed to 41 state and national news stories– both print, TV and online – on county jails including 3 op-eds

SPORTS
BOUND
FOR NBA

Julen Green, a possible Rockets draft pick, has been a prospect since middle school.

PAGE C1



ONLINE

**ACTIVATE YOUR
DIGITAL ACCOUNT**

Take full advantage of your subscription and get unlimited access to the latest news online, read the digital replica of the newspaper and more.

HOUSTONCHRONICLE.COM/ACTIVATE



CORONAVIRUS

**SCHOLAR'S
SURPRISE**

An Alief student wins a \$5,000 scholarship in Harris County's vaccine incentive initiative.

PAGE A29

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

SUNDAY, JULY 4, 2021 • HOUSTONCHRONICLE.COM • VOL. 120, NO. 264 • \$4.00 ***

FOURTH OF JULY

U.S. still aspiring toward all 'are created equal'



TJP's co-founder & executive director Krish Gundu was invited to share a personal essay on her experience of being an immigrant in the July 4th, 2021 edition of Houston Chronicle.

n in cold, in hunger, in med:



🐦 In partnership with Zealous, published Shedding Light, a digital archive of pretrial detention stories, experiences, and art **sheddinglight.in**



**ZEAL
OUS**

There is no more necessary or challenging work than providing material support, advocacy, and humanity to people currently incarcerated, their families, and communities. Texas Jail Project (TJP) shows up -- in Texas courts, in Texas Jails, and in Texas halls of power -- to fight and advocate with intention, thought, and humility, for health and safety, not just for those jailed pretrial, but for us all. TJP goes further than just direct advocacy -- they engage the people they serve in trauma-informed and non-extractive ways to share their stories and experiences to breathe life into the compelling data and statistics that freedom saves money, and actually helps achieve health and safety, while incarceration undermines it. TJP has emerged as a national leader -- in how to combine direct services work with high impact advocacy -- a true resource of wisdom and love. TJP approaches their work with an authentic practice and thoughtful implementation of the concept and cause of care not cages. It has been a true honor to get to work with TJP over the last over three years.

Scott Hechinger - Director, Zealous

DENTON COUNTY JAIL

BRYAN'S STORY

THE HUMAN COST OF PRETRIAL INCARCERATION

DIED PRE-TRIAL JAN 29, 2021

FROM MEDICAL NEGLECT IN DENTON CO JAIL

Bryan Largent's cash bail was a death sentence.

Bryan was arrested on March 9, 2020 and his bail was set at \$5,000. His family paid using a bail bondsman and he was released in poor health, free to continue treatment for a number of serious medical conditions.

8 months later, his indictment came through. His bond was increased to \$25,000 with additional bond conditions, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. Bryan was re-arrested January 10, 2021, 3 days after being released from the hospital following heart surgery. He was on oxygen, taking multiple medications, and had strict post-op procedures to follow - including additional surgeries needed after recovery.

Nevertheless, the criminal punishment system and the status quo of pretrial incarceration pursued Bryan, separated him from his family, and put \$25,000 dollars worth of distance between them.

He died 19 days later.

When his belongings were returned, the quantity of medications indicated the jail had not complied with his doctor's post-op orders.

"THIS IS WHOLLY UNACCEPTABLE, CRIMINAL, AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN. EVERYONE THAT ENCOUNTERED MY BROTHER FROM THE TIME HE WAS ARRESTED UNTIL THE MOMENT HE DIED, SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE. THIS IS NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE."

**JEAN SKINNER,
BRYAN'S BELOVED
SISTER**

We produced reports cards for four county jails



Mold, Sewage, COVID-19, and Custody Deaths

Texas Jail Project Reviews a Year of Conditions and Cost in Denton County Jail



- 773 of 972 people in Denton County Jail are pretrial. It costs the county at least \$41,400 per year, per defendant to confine them.
- Denton County will spend approximately \$40 million on the jail alone in 2021 and less than \$10 million on community health and welfare.
- Since 2009, at least 19 people have died in Denton county jail, most of whom were legally innocent. Custody death reports since 2002 reveal a troubling pattern of jail medical neglect.

- Still no custody death report filed with Attorney General's office for Bryan Largent, who died of medical neglect in 2021
- At least 150 people are routinely in quarantine due to COVID exposure
- TJP has received more reports of mold in Denton County Jail than any other facility in the state

80% of the
Denton
county jail
population is
pretrial.

Organizing

EMPOWERING FAMILIES AT THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE

Texas Jail Project Newsletter
April 2021

Organizing

- Building community power to advance grassroots campaigns around jail conditions, custody deaths, county policies, & local budgets
- Training, organizing, and facilitating community testimonies

HARRIS COUNTY JUDGES:

**RELEASE
PRETRIAL PEOPLE
FROM JAIL!**

Joined partners from Texas Fair Defense Project, Grassroots Leadership, and Restoring Justice to hold judges accountable for the pretrial population crisis in Harris county jail

The screenshot shows a Facebook Live event titled "The Truth about Bail Reform: A Virtual Event" by the Texas Organizing Project (TOP). The event is currently live with 87 viewers. The video feed displays four participants in a grid: a man in a blue shirt with a sign behind him that says "CLEAR THE TAILS" and "END CASH BAIL"; a woman in a purple shirt; a woman in a blue shirt; and a man in a police uniform. A text overlay at the bottom from the "Texas Jail Project" reads: "In practice, lots of cases with 'no bond.' Judges have the power to do that." The right sidebar shows 28 reactions, 94 comments, and 30 shares. Comments include one from "caitlynneslaw.org" and another from "Chivas Watson" asking how to be effective in the Legislature for bail reform.

Facebook Live event interface showing a video feed with four participants and a text overlay from the Texas Jail Project.

TEXAS JAIL PROJECT

Texas Jail Project

In practice, lots of cases with "no bond." Judges have the power to do that.

TOP Texas Organizing Project

TEXAS JAIL PROJECT

Facebook LIVE 87

TOP Texas Organizing Project is live now. 50m - 1h

The Truth about Bail Reform
A Virtual Event

28 94 Comments 30 S

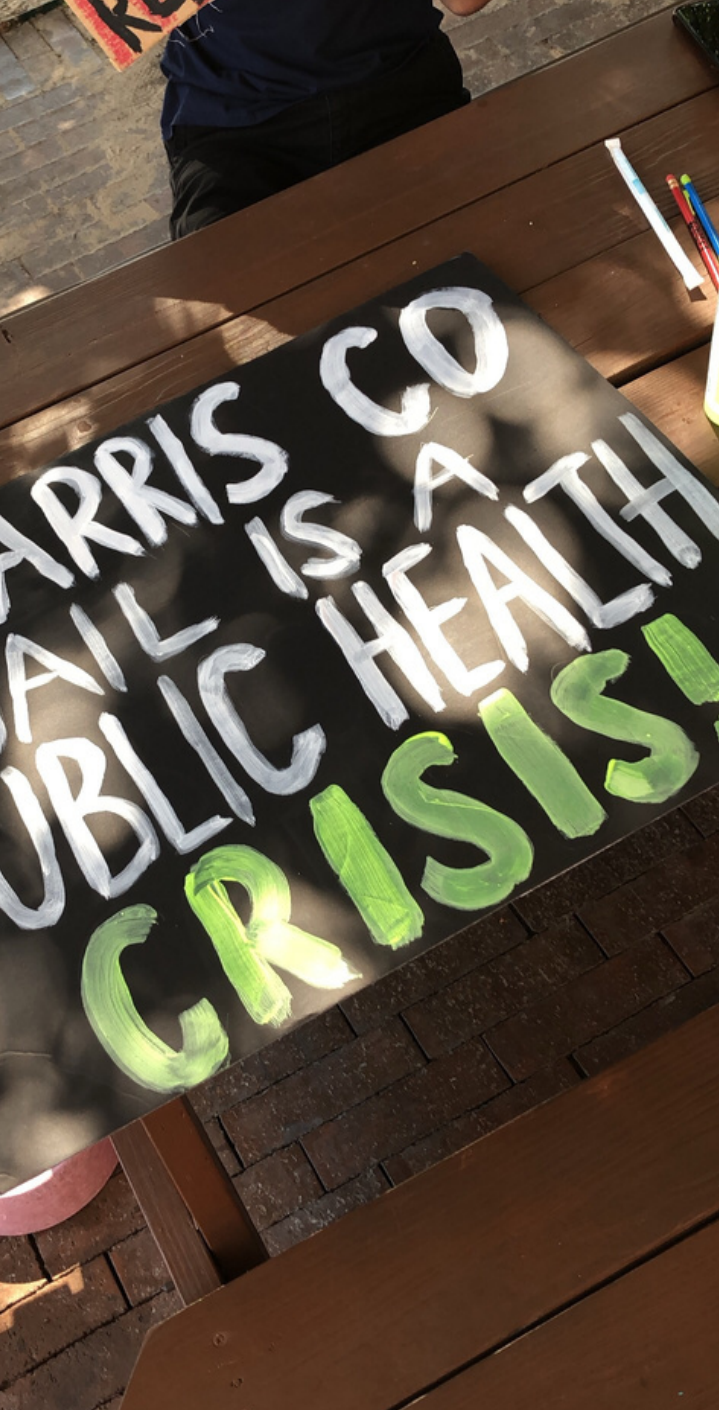
Like Comment Share

Comments

caitlynneslaw.org
Like Reply 1m

Chivas Watson
Judges -- how can we be effective in the Legislature to get bail reform in law?
Like Reply 1m

Write a comment...



- Organized and participated in direct action to depopulate Harris county jail and hold District Attorney Kim Ogg accountable



Texas Jail Project is an outstanding organization. We rely so much on them as thought partners, particularly as the work relates to medical advocacy and jail conditions. Krishnaveni and her team are incredibly insightful, inspiring and approachable. So much of what we do and have done couldn't have been done without the knowledge and guidance of the folks at TJP. The Mano Amiga team is incredibly lucky and grateful to have such excellent and skilled partners in the fight against mass incarceration.



Eric Martinez - Mano Amiga

Organized over 20 testimonies of formerly incarcerated people, their loved ones, and expert witnesses like defense attorneys and maternal health researchers during the 87th legislative session

Defeated proposed constitutional amendment SJR 3, which would have severely limited Texans' right to be presumed innocent



Jerome VanZandt after his release from Harris County Jail in July 7, 2021.



Goldie VanZandt, wife of formerly jailed veteran and TJP advocate, in front of the Texas Capitol, where she met with lawmakers to discuss veterans issues in jails



GOLDIE VANZANDT URGES YOU TO VOTE NO

SB-21: Bad For Veterans

Thank You Committee Members and Senator Huffman.

I speak before you today to urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 21. **My husband and I are both veterans of the United States Navy.** We have dedicated our lives to service, and built a family rooted in love and respect. My husband is not a criminal. He is a loving husband, father, and grandfather. Nevertheless, my family's life has been forever changed by his incarceration in Harris County Jail due to his mental illness and high bond.

I am a Veteran. I served honorably in the United States Navy active for 5 years and 1 year of Reserve Service. My spouse served 20 years in the Military. He is an honorable retired 70% disabled veteran. **He is a Conservative Republican and I am a Democrat. We believe in Bipartisanship and country over party.** Currently my husband is awaiting a hearing in the Harris County Jail for substance abuse. The Harris County jail system treats our veterans as hardened criminals; most are not, but suffer from mental health issues which are treatable. **The \$100,000 bond that Harris county has set is unreasonable, very high and not valid.** He has been to rehabilitation before for 7 days only. I am requesting a referral from the VA that he attend a 1-3- month drug abuse program designed especially for Veterans. It's so hard to get the care we need from the VA.

After his many sacrifices -- serving during wartime, sleepless nights, missing the birth of our kids, anniversaries, birthdays, school plays, graduations, and separation from the family that he loves and holds dear -- we get a "Thank you for your service!" Well, NO, that's not enough. I wish that this country would stop thanking veterans for our service, and truly show some thanks by voting NO on this bill that would make it harder for families like ours."

Sincerely,

Goldie VanZandt

Proud Grandmother and United States Navy Veteran





FACT SHEET

SB-21 At a Glance

- Senate Bill 21 would create new and more restrictive procedures for bail hearings.

Under existing bail law, my husband has already gone 1 year without a bail hearing.

- Senate Bill 21 would require the consideration of one's criminal history when setting bail amounts.

My husband's previous possession charge is a reflection of his illness, not his character.

- Senate Bill 21 is bad for mentally ill veterans and could conflict with Tex. Code Crim. Proc. 17.032, which permits a release on personal bond for certain alleged offenders with MI or IDD.

41% of veterans have a need for mental healthcare.



Existing bail law in Texas is restrictive and punitive enough. Our jails are already crowded with hardworking service members like my husband who simply can't afford bond. Let's not make it worse.

VOTE NO ON SB-21



Texas Jail Project gives family members of incarcerated loved ones who are mentally ill or in crisis a way to be heard. They provide information, guidance and support, when other organizations fail. They supply a platform for voices to be heard and they help families get to those platforms. TJP fights to hold accountable the organizations that are meant to protect the helpless, giving the powerless a chance to be heard.



For me, they reached out when all the other organizations failed me. I learned what I had to say mattered, my son mattered and I have the right to ask questions, expect answers and the right to have my say in committee forums. I learned I can make a difference and my son deserves to have better care.

TJP gives hope to the hopeless and they are a powerful force for change.

Deborah Winters - Family member of incarcerated person



- Facilitated public comments by a dozen community members at county commissioners court and state agencies.
- One TJP staff member who's also a community member provided weekly public comment at their county commissioners court for over 40 weeks

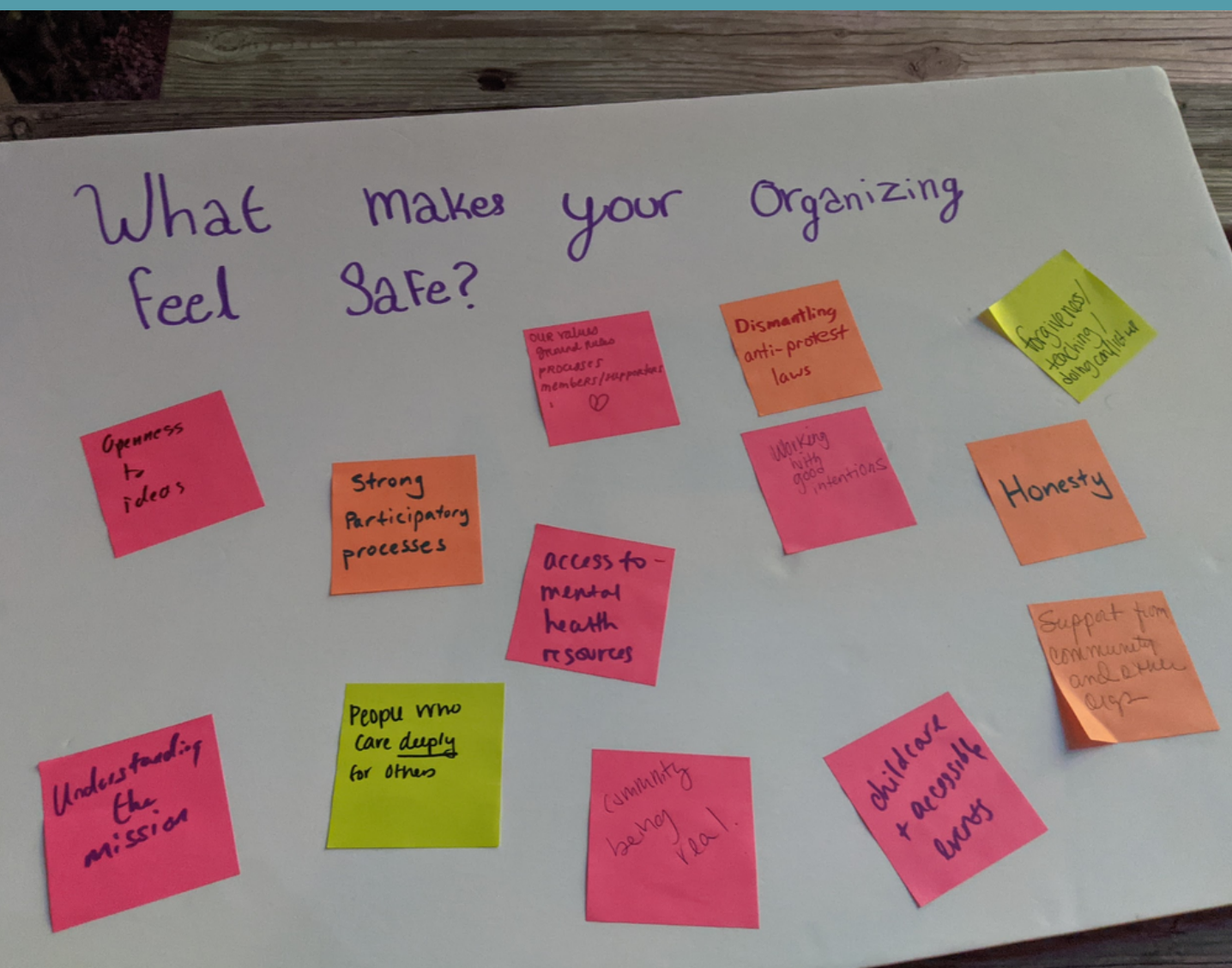


Dalila Reynoso at Smith County Commissioners Court



Krish Gundu and Hogg Foundation Peer Policy Fellow Kevin Garrett at reproductive rights conference at Texas Women's University





First meeting for the Community Safety Agenda campaign in Harris county which we launched in 2021 to reimagine public safety





Texas Jail Project

@TxJailProject



Harris county must cancel the contract to forcibly transfer ~500 pretrial people from Harris co jail to deadly private prison facilities in Louisiana! Keep families together and keep our communities safe!
bit.ly/HarrisCountyJa... @HarrisCoJudge @RodneyEllis @AdrianGarciaHTX

STOP THE TRANSFERS

WE DEMAND HARRIS COUNTY CANCEL THE CONTRACT TO FORCIBLY TRANSFER ~500 PEOPLE FROM HARRIS COUNTY JAIL TO DANGEROUS LOUISIANA LA SALLE FACILITIES

CANCEL THE CONTRACT
DECRIMINALIZE OUR COMMUNITIES
DEPOPULATE THE JAIL
KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

THE OMICRON VARIANT POSES SERIOUS RISK TO TEXANS. HIGH JAIL POPULATIONS ARE PANDEMIC ENGINES AND WORSEN COMMUNITY SPREAD.

COMMUNITY SAFETY DEMANDS BETTER!

LEARN MORE & TAKE ACTION



- HARRIS COUNTY INTENDS TO FORCIBLY TRANSFER ~500 PRETRIAL DEFENDANTS HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY FROM THEIR FAMILIES TO DANGEROUS LA SALLE LOUISIANA JAILS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE HOLIDAYS
- HARRIS COUNTY JAIL BUDGET IS AT HISTORIC HIGH, ALREADY COSTING TAXPAYERS OVER \$244,000,000 THIS YEAR - MORE THAN POLLUTION CONTROL, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND MENTAL HEALTH COMBINED
- THE TRANSFER WILL EXACERBATE ROOT CAUSES OF THE POPULATION CRISIS: POOR INDIGENT DEFENSE AND COURT BACKLOGS
- PEOPLE ARE BEING CHARGED TOO OFTEN. LAST YEAR, 67% OF MISDEMEANOR ARRESTS RESULTED IN A DISMISSAL. IN 2019, 34% OF ALL FELONY ARRESTS WERE DISMISSED

CANCEL THE CONTRACT

KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER & SAY NO TO MORE COUNTY RESOURCES ON PUNISHMENT WHEN SAFER ALTERNATIVES EXIST TO REDUCE THE JAIL POPULATION

REDUCE ARRESTS

STOP ALL QUALITY OF LIFE ARRESTS, HALT WARRANT ENFORCEMENTS, CITE AND RELEASE ALL ELIGIBLE MISDEMEANOR A AND B CHARGES, END THE CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS, AND STOP ALL PATROL POLICING

DEPOPULATE THE JAIL

IMMEDIATELY RELEASE ON PERSONAL BOND ALL CHILDREN, PREGNANT PEOPLE, AND

Policy

**TELL YOUR
STATE REPS:
DON'T EXPAND
THE CASH BAIL
SYSTEM**

Vote NO on HB-20



Policy

- Monitoring, documenting, and reporting on jail conditions
- Authoring legislation and advising lawmakers on jail and pretrial issues
- Advocating for policies that mitigate jail harm and advance public health

T E X A S
J A I L
P R O J E C T



Civil Rights Corps (CRC) collaboration with Texas Jail Project (TJP) since 2020 has been absolutely essential. We have worked closely together on a variety of projects, including lifting up atrocities in the jail; connecting with reporters at the local, state, and national level to shift the media narrative around bail, violence, and community safety; and developing strategies to leverage our unique positions in the Texas advocacy ecosystem to push for liberatory policies. TJP's small but mighty team is a keystone player in statewide and national coalitions working on reducing pretrial detention and its harms. CRC aims to ensure that our work is informed by TJP and we hope that our litigation, policy, and narrative efforts in Texas advance TJP's goals.

Elizabeth Rossi Director of Strategic Initiatives Civil Rights Corps



Covid-19 Crisis in County Jails



TCJS COVID-19 Form A

County: HARRIS
Date: 8/8/2020

Inmates

Number of inmates with active positive test confirmation	<u>725</u>
Number of inmates pending test results	<u>0</u>
Number of inmates quarantined/isolated, not active	<u>2354</u>
Number of inmates being treated offsite for active, COVID-19	<u>4</u>
Number of confirmed deaths related to COVID-19	<u>2</u>
Number of suspected deaths related to COVID-19	<u>1</u>

Staff

Number of jailers with active positive test confirmation	<u>154</u>
Number of jailers quarantined/isolated pending test results	<u>27</u>

As infected patients can shed the virus before symptoms are pronounced, simply quarantining individuals when they become overtly symptomatic does not prevent the spread of the virus throughout the facility. The safest way to prevent COVID-19 from running rampant within jails and then spreading into the community, is to reduce the number of people inside the jail. The following recommendations designed in consultation with jail advocates such as TJP, would decrease the already taxed jail system and help mitigate, or even prevent, the spread of the pandemic within jails:

1. **Immediately release anyone charged with an offense that does not involve a serious physical safety risk to the community:** More than 70% of those currently held in county jails are pretrial. In 2016, 40% of people arrested couldn't make bail of even a few hundred dollars.
2. **Prioritize immediate release on personal bonds of populations that CDC has classified as vulnerable (pregnant women and patients with asthma, cancer, heart disease, lung disease, diabetes):** Judges should issue personal bonds for medically fragile people, based upon recommendations by jail medical staff, lawyers, and pretrial services.
3. **Stop jail churn by ending the practice of jailing those who do not pose a serious safety risk:** Sheriffs in Collin and Hays counties have already instructed police to cite and release non-violent offenders. This model should be followed throughout the state.
4. **Release all persons who are within 6 months of completing their sentence in a county jail.**

TJP recommendations during the pandemic drafted
with Doctors for Change



“My husband has COPD. Can’t they let him out on bond during this? No one answers my calls, not the court-appointed lawyer or the jail medical. Can you find out?”



“My daughter is pregnant and they just keep her in solitary all the time. She wrote me & said she is so depressed, she’d rather catch Coronavirus than stay in there any more. Can you get the medical people to talk to me?”

“My daughter has schizophrenia and I know she is not getting her meds because she has not called me in 5 weeks! The jail won’t tell me anything! It’s like a black hole. I just want to hear my daughter’s voice and know that she’s okay. Please help.”



December 18, 2020

Bell County Sheriff's Office
Sheriff Eddy Lange
104 S. Main St.
Belton, TX 76513
eddy.lange@bellcounty.texas.gov

Re: Texas Public Information Act Request

Dear Public Information Officer:

We submit this Public Information Act request to seek information about COVID-19 in the Bell County Jail. The plight of people incarcerated in county jails during COVID-19 is often hidden from view of the public, with only a few rare exceptions. For example, incarcerated people at El Paso County Jail were recently photographed in their striped uniforms moving bodies from



As part of our government transparency and accountability work, in collaboration with allies, we filed over 90 public information requests in 26 counties spanning multiple state agencies



- 🐦 Filed dozens of complaints with state agencies like the Texas Medical Board, Disability Rights Texas, Texas Indigent Defense Commission, and Texas Commission on Jail Standards
- 🐦 Championed HB 1307 in the 87th session of the Texas legislature, requiring trauma care for incarcerated pregnant people reporting assault or loss of pregnancy, and invited to participate in rulemaking workshops conducted by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, translating this law into administrative code



As a regulatory agency, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards is tasked with the inspection of our county jails to ensure compliance with state law and administrative rules. Over the years, the professional relationship between Texas Jail Project and the Texas Commission on Jail Standards has evolved. As one of the most active advocacy organizations we interact with, they have been invited to serve on not only informal work groups but official advisory committees that impact jail operations. It is not possible for us to have an inspector in every county jail every day, but when a complaint is filed, it starts a process. Even if the complaint is not founded, just the act of investigating the complaint allows us to ensure a jail is in fact complying with Minimum Jail Standards and provide assistance outside of the normal inspection process.

This level of communication between a regulatory entity and advocacy group, allows us to be more effective and carry out our mandate.

Texas Commission on Jail Standards



Joined a coalition of civil rights, immigration rights and advocacy groups to expose conditions of **Operation Lone Star** pretrial detainees held in two prisons



Krishnaveni Gundu <krish.gundu@texasjailproject.org>

Complaint on behalf of Operation Lonestar detainees in Briscoe & Segovia units

17 messages

- **Medical:** Care for illness and injuries is essentially nonexistent. Men have reported that they have to wait up to one week or more for medical care after submitting a written request. Men have reported lack of attention to pinkeye, lacerations, diabetes, and kidney-related illness. This is because when men do get to see medical staff, there is no follow-up. Families expressed grave concern for the well-being of their loved ones. **Diabetic men have been particularly impacted by the insufficient diet.**
- **Use of Force and Racial Slurs:** Multiple men have told us that guards use force accompanied by racist language. Guards once struck a man who complained about the 3 AM breakfast; guards removed a man from his cell and placed him in a form of segregated housing (in a small cell with no window) for an unknown infraction.



In Texas, mass incarceration is the standard, rather than the exception. Texas Jail Project is a leader on the front lines with communities that are impacted by Texas's ever-evolving and expanding carceral infrastructure. The Texas Civil Rights Project is proud to partner with Texas Jail Project to advocate for an end to harmful practices like Operation Lone Star and cash based bail. Texas Jail Project plays an indispensable role in connecting directly with incarcerated individuals and their families to document, shed light on, and mitigate the harms caused by these practices. Together with Texas Jail Project, we fight for the humane treatment of those currently confined in Texas jails as we work to reimagine what public safety looks like in Texas communities free from dependence on the carceral state.

Texas Civil Rights Project



Created visual aids for House and Senate committee members to tell the stories of how these proposed laws can help or harm real people's lives.



Bexar County *Meet Luz*

Luz is the mom of a developmentally disabled young man. She has full guardianship and yet was repeatedly denied updates on her son's condition. The jail incorrectly cited HIPPA as the reason for refusal. After weeks of calling she was finally told that yes, her son was decompensating and had in fact, not been eating, taking medicine, or speaking for weeks.



Denton County *Meet Jean*

Jean lost her brother in Denton county jail this year after he was arrested just days after open heart surgery. Nobody notified her family that her brother was dying in the hospital. When his belongings were returned, the quantity of medications indicated the jail had not complied with his doctor's post-op orders.



Montgomery County

Response from TCJS when the family of an elderly diabetic man was unable to get information on his hospitalization despite a signed medical release.

You alleged that Montgomery County would not provide his family with any information regarding the health and wellbeing of Mr. [REDACTED]

Neither medical providers nor jails have to release medical information when provided a signed authorization form. The form allows medical providers to release medical information, but it does not require them to do so. Medical providers may still refuse to release medical information. There are circumstances that require medical providers to release information, but a signed authorization form is not one of them.



Texas Jail Project has been a valuable source of information and insight into how the system impacts individuals on a practical basis as well as identifying issues that result in violations of individual rights.

Aaryce Hayes - Policy Specialist, Disability Rights HTX





Texas Jail Project
@TxJailProject

Good news thread:
When folks ask what's wrong with cash bail, tell them about 20 yr old Glenn who spent 115 days in a cage in Smith county because he did not have \$1500.

No previous record, no indictment. Just waiting.

Crying, he said, "\$1500 is a lot when you don't have it."



Texas Jail Project @TxJailProject · Feb 28, 2021

"Every 10 days I would ask the jailers about my case. No one would tell me anything. I never saw or heard from my court appointed attorney. Never."

Eventually a jailer took compassion and called our community organizer and advocate [@Dalilareyn82](#) who immediately bailed him out.



1 30 186



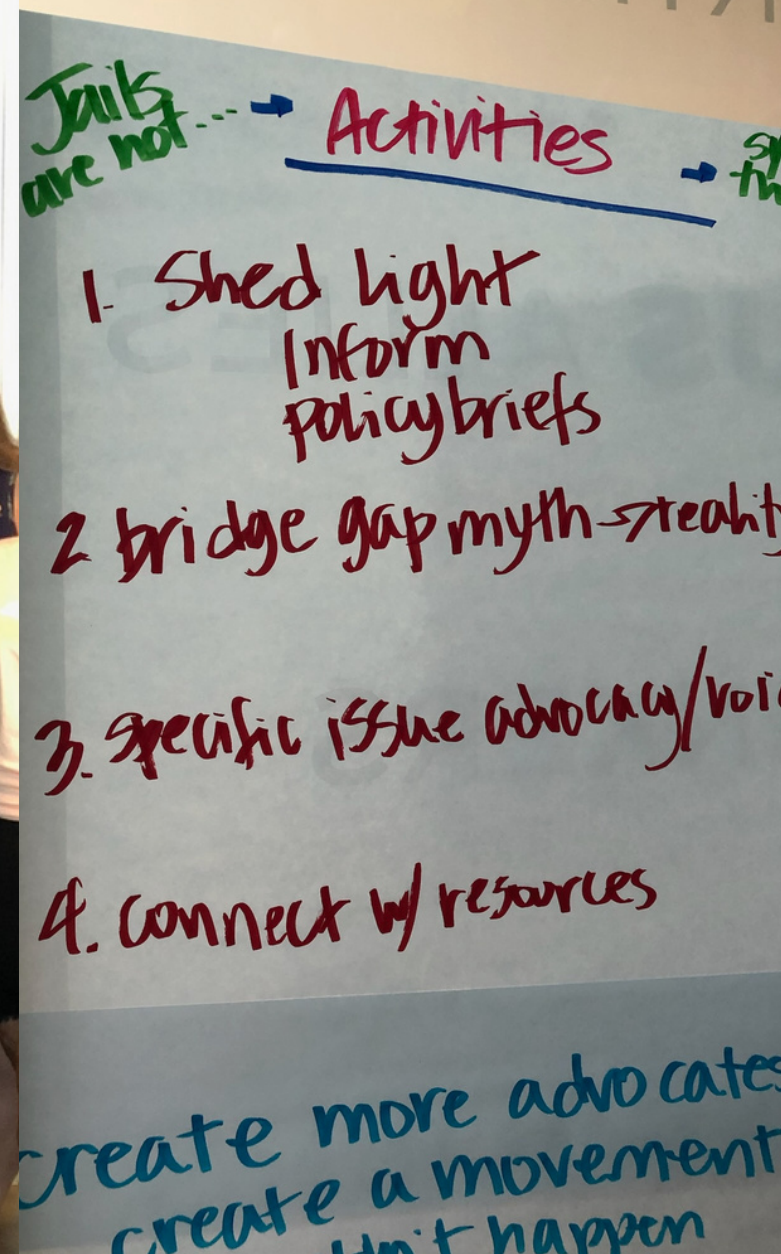
Texas Jail Project @TxJailProject · Feb 28, 2021

And this morning, he joined our volunteer team in delivering 600 cases of water to the community. The same community that put him in a cage for 115 days and forgot about him. Tomorrow, he'll be getting on the first bus home, back to his godmother and his job.



5 25 284

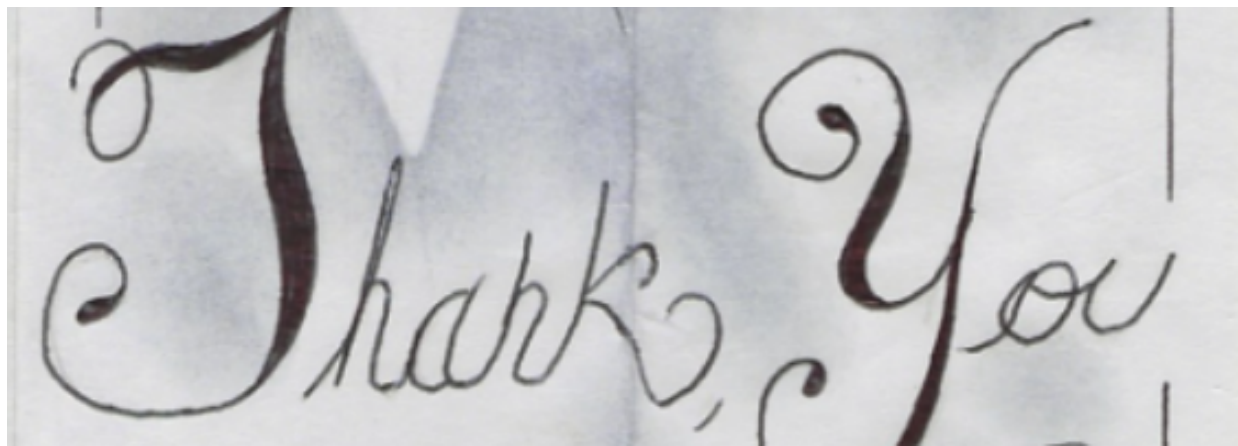
Strategic plan



🐦 We gathered our current and past board and team members to complete our 5 year strategic plan

Grants

**Our work was made possible by
funding from the following partners**





Texas Jail Project is the only organization that recognizes that county jails are the most vital institution driving everything that happens in our criminal system. These jails often get ignored by judges, attorneys, law enforcement, policymakers, and advocates, but are the most important factor to someone being accused of a crime. Texas Jail Project knows that to properly care for people, go where they are. They are constantly a vital resource to make sure people are not being abused in the jail and makes everyone else's work in this system easier. Contributions to them are an investment in everyone's well-being.

Drew Willey - Restoring Justice



Public Welfare Foundation



 Awarded multi-year operations funding from Heising Simons Foundation

 Awarded rapid response funding from Spark Justice (Borealis Philanthropy)

 Awarded emergency direct aid funding from Public Welfare Foundation post-Winter Storm Uri

The logo for The Bail Project, featuring the words "THE BAIL PROJECT" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The letter "O" in "PROJECT" is replaced by a red circular icon containing a white silhouette of a person.The logo for the Ms. Foundation for Women, featuring a large red "W" above the text "Ms. FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN" in red, sans-serif capital letters.

 Selected to join Ms. Foundation For Women's Ms. South 2021 cohort, a multi-disciplinary strategy to strengthen the financial sustainability and leadership development capacity of organizations led by women and girls of color in the U.S. South

 Thanks to financial and technical support from The Bail Project, we ran a revolving community bail fund in 2021 to reunite 47 community members with their families.

 Thanks to Circle for Justice Innovations for a three year grant from 2021-2023.

The logo for the Texas Jail Project, featuring the words "TEXAS JAIL PROJECT" in white, sans-serif capital letters, with a small black silhouette of a person to the right of the word "JAIL".

Ending Mass Incarceration Where It Begins:

In Our Backyards

2020-2021 Community Grant Cohort

Supporting Decarceral Organizing in Small Cities and Rural Places



Vera INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

TEXAS
JAIL
PROJECT

For the second year in a row, selected to join Vera of Justice Institute's In Our Backyards national cohort to end mass incarceration in rural communities

UNDERSTANDING THE CRISIS

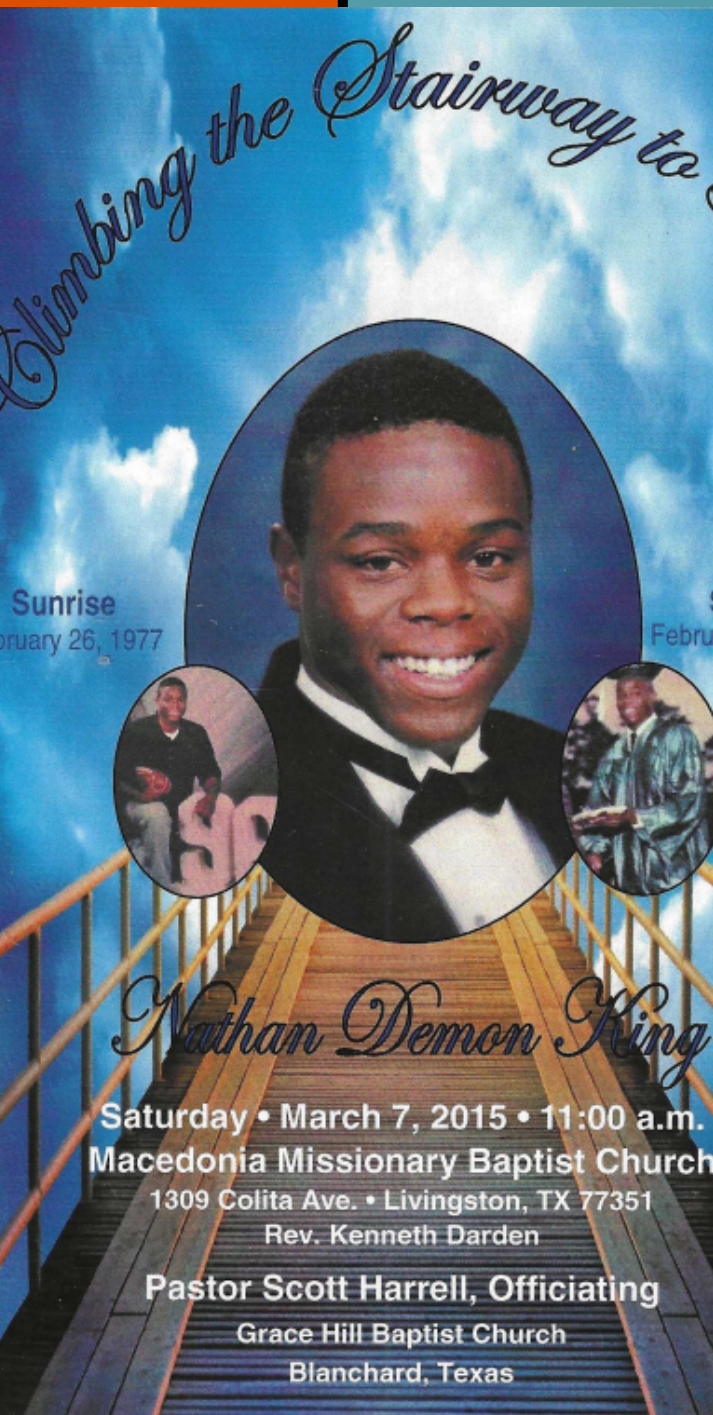
Explore Shedding Light
to learn more about the
routine medical neglect
and overcrowding crisis
in Texas county jails

TEXAS
JAIL
PROJECT

TEXAS
JAIL
PROJECT



Received two Art For Justice Art and
Advocacy grant awards:
To expand Shedding Light and;



🐦 Create custodial death memorial quilts in partnership with Jesse Krimes – a formerly incarcerated, nationally renowned artist – for families who have lost loved ones in jail



In the second year of the pandemic, with jail populations on the rise, it's more important than ever to imagine a world without mass incarceration – a world where systems of punishment are replaced with communities of care. Join us in fighting for a healthier Texas.

