



BRANDON CREIGHTON

STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 4

April 10, 2015

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Capitol Building
Room 2S.1
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Governor Abbott,

I am adamantly opposed to the Al Price State Juvenile Correctional Facility in Beaumont being converted into a halfway house for civil commitment violent sexual offenders and stand with Senate District 4 community leaders in requesting that you also oppose this effort.

In 1999, our state legislature discovered a group of sexual predators being released from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice were in need of long-term supervision and treatment and were likely to repeat acts of predatory sexual violence. As a remedy, the legislature implemented a new program called the "Outpatient Sexually Violent Predator Treatment Program." Today, those duties have been transferred to the Office of Violent Sex Offender Management (OVSOM) under The Department of State Health Services.

As of March 2015, there are 363 civilly committed sex offenders in the state of Texas: 185 in the community and 178 in prison. These offenders are currently housed across the state in privately held facilities in Dallas, Ft. Worth, Houston and El Paso.

According to OVSOM, they are currently undergoing a housing crisis. Two of their primary housing vendors are not accepting new clients. The OVSOM state they have been working with legislators to revamp programming and envision a tiered program for client movement from more restrictive alternatives to less restrictive alternatives based on progress.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, I've had very little direct input from personnel at OVSOM.

In December 2013, the Al Price State Juvenile Correctional Facility was closed and deeded to Jefferson County. Since then, the Jefferson County has adhered to the stipulation within the deed that the county will use the property for a purpose that benefits the public interest of the state.

BEAUMONT OFFICE:
350 PINE ST., SUITE 1450
BEAUMONT, TEXAS 77701
(409) 838-9861

CAPITOL OFFICE:
P.O. BOX 12068
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711
(512) 463-0104 • FAX (512) 463-6373

THE WOODLANDS OFFICE:
2829 TECHNOLOGY FOREST, STE. 240
THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS 77381
(936) 539-0028

E-MAIL: BRANDON.CREIGHTON@SENATE.STATE.TX.US

COMMITTEES:

BUSINESS & COMMERCE, VICE-CHAIR • AGRICULTURE, WATER & RURAL AFFAIRS • CRIMINAL JUSTICE • STATE AFFAIRS

It is my understanding that OVSOM has expressed interest using this facility to house its clients.

My capitol office has received an outpouring from Senate District 4 constituents and every member of the Commissioner's Court publicly speaking against it. I am committed to resolving this issue favorably for my community and asking you not allow OVSOM to transfer and house these violent sexual predators in Jefferson County. Incarceration is one thing. Allowing predators to come-and-go on a daily basis is another.

Creating additional barriers to job recruitment and/or retention creates a disservice to the economy of this state and nation. The importance of maintaining a healthy recruitment effort for our petrochemical complex and the third largest port in the nation cannot be achieved if the Al Price facility is converted into a halfway house for some of the worst sexual offenders in our state. Job recruitment in Southeast Texas is key in keeping Texas the 11th largest economy in the world.

This is not a classic "not in my backyard" scenario. This is directly tied to a much needed Southeast Texas workforce which supports the fabric of our statewide economy.

I look forward in advance to your response.

Respectfully,


Brandon Creighton
State Senator
District 4, Texas