

Friends,

TASKING and Waste - One significant lobbyist said in a frustrated tone that one argument is that, “Volunteers can do it all.” The answer was, “Who coordinates them?” And the message is NOT getting across to those who wish to shut down prison chaplaincy—someone will have coordinate, and *that* is only part of the problem. The other is the whole volunteer calendar, an ongoing and unique series of events for each prison, and the religious calendar too. And no small part is the myriad calls for deaths and critical illnesses. There is no question that someone will be “tasked” with handling that.

I doubt very seriously that Mr. Brad Livingston (and perhaps his deputy Brian Collier) are aware that the current certification process by the American Correctional Association (ACA) has been certifying all Texas prisons over the last decade *requires* a full-time uniformed correctional officer (CO 5) to handle all of the ONGOING paperwork and ever-accumulating preparation for the next three-year inspection. In addition to the hundreds of thousands spent in the ongoing certification, there 110 CO’s *pulled* from the shift by the warden dedicated to that task alone. And all of the time for all of the staff involved in “reporting” elements solely to ACA costs too. I suspect a correct audit would say ACA costs TDCJ \$1 million a year that is NOT even in the budget. Eliminating ACA will FREE 110 officers back to the shift. One TDCJ official and some legislators have *committed themselves* to NOT decreasing the CO staffing, yet ACA is TAXING the TDCJ budget for 110 CO’s every single year without even being a part of the shift. Furthermore, TDCJ has most of its prisons accredited, and I doubt that such accreditation saves TDCJ \$1 million in lawsuits – no clear figure on that. It is a luxury consuming more time and money not even clearly marked on the budget! Invisible waste???

Yet that is precisely what is being *calculated* for Chaplaincy if eliminated – I *know* several wardens who have already said they would have “assign” someone to handle it all ... a CO at least will be tasked with handling all volunteer coordination, the volunteer calendar, and the religious calendar – *pulling* 110 CO’s from the shift without ever becoming a part of the budget. A loss of 110 CO’s – NO SAVING at all, and a decided increase in inefficiency. Moreover, the TIME taken for all of the death and critical illness calls by all of the other staffers – randomized or by that designated CO – will result in terrible (not poor, but *terrible*) pastoral care.

Only this will not be *invisible* waste ... it will be a long-term assault on the senses of good volunteers, a scrambling of religious inmate leaders, a vast increase in religious gaming by inmates (and others, be they staff or volunteers), and worse of all – the inmates and their families will have scattered and sloppy pastoral care in their most vulnerable times. Hear this – a thought – the staff chaplain is the ONLY staffer who regularly shakes an inmate’s hand (some hug). No other staffer does that, and ALL the security personnel are *prohibited* from such physical contact. HEAR this ... the human side of TDCJ will go COMPLETELY inhuman with the deletion of staff chaplains, as NO STAFF will be there to *touch* them with the hand of fellowship, human to human ... and that will be the ultimate *INVISIBLE* waste. TDCJ will become warehouse for certain ... where no hand of compassion and equality and concern for the soul extended by ANY staffer.



CBF NETEORK - I have been in touch with George Pickle, my endorsing agent at [Cooperative Baptist Fellowship \(CBF\)](#). Shortly, he is going to direct a letter to all CBF Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors in Texas. We discussed letters to churches too ... more to come there.



[Florida Director of Chaplains Alex Taylor](#) – as a 15-year TDCJ veteran, and lately the director for Prison Chaplains in Florida, he weighs in on support for retention of Chaplaincy in a unique way. He will be writing others in Texas too. Thanks Alex, and welcome to our small band of brothers and sisters fighting to preserve this grand old institution.



RADIO INTERVIEWS - Pastor Trey Graham of FBC Melissa has capture two more salient interviews on his radio program. Thanks Trey.

NEW > [RADIO Interview - Suzii Paynter on Texas Budget Complication and Need and Alternatives for Prison Chaplaincy](#)

NEW > [RADIO Interview - Bill Glass on Saving Texas Chaplaincy](#)

They are both insightful ... what would we do without the support of folks like them?



Fast of Esther – friends, the story of Esther will be celebrated in the Jewish and Messianic Jewish communities throughout Texas Prisons, beginning on the 17th of this month. We would do well to remember that story. This effort of ours is not so much about jobs, but this is vastly more about the gentle institution itself. Those who have been doing this a while are mindful that *most* staffers have a religion and *most* offenders have some kind of faith. There are many who care. But some have never ceased to undercut and defund and but the thumb on Chaplaincy affairs ... only God knows why and who they all are. Protecting the First Amendment rights of all in a fair manner is no easy task WITH a sophisticated chaplaincy policy. Working through that with a heart FOR the souls of all – that *is* chaplaincy! And ALL people in Texas have a stake here. The Fast of Esther commemorates the courage of one woman who risked all for HER people. What each and every person does in the next month, and that MAY be all we have – a month or two – will tell all about where they have chosen to take a stand “with their people” – or not – people of faith and those who value the soul and value religion.

In talking with George Pickle, it was brought home to me as he listened to me. Chaplains do a lot of listening. It is clear to me, that if the darker powers that be can succeed in deleting chaplaincy – please, hear this – IF IT CAN BE DONE IN TEXAS, then it can be done anywhere else in the good old USA. If the faith community and *communities* mighty Texas cannot rise the challenge here, certainly, Haman will have his way and it will be the end for chaplaincy in other states too.

Remember the KEY – constituents who *connect* with their Texas Rep. and Senator help a lot, and those who help others connect help more.

Sincerely, Mike

[Michael G. Maness](#)

[SAVE TEXAS PRISON CHAPLAINCY](#)

