



*Office of the Independent Ombudsman  
for the Texas Youth Commission*

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**Fourth Quarter Report FY 10  
June 1, 2010 - August 31, 2010**

**I. Introduction**

This report is the fourth Quarter Report for FY 2010 (June-August 2009) submitted pursuant to the requirement of Senate Bill 103. Mr. John Moore served as the Chief Ombudsman during the time period covered by this report; Mr. Moore tendered his resignation on August 9, 2010, to be effective August 31, 2010. This report will serve to provide a description of the activities of the Office of the Independent Ombudsman (OIO) and will address the following areas as specified by Senate Bill 103 (SB103):

- general scope of work of the OIO;
- trends observed as a result of reviews and investigations of facilities and contract care programs that have been undertaken by this office;
- recommendations to improve the efficiency of operations of the Texas Youth Commission and the OIO.

This report was finalized and submitted by Assistant Ombudsman Tish Elliott-Wilkins.

**II. Overview of the Work of the Office of the Independent Ombudsman**

**Accounting of Site Visits, Youth Contacts, and Individual Cases**

<b>Site Visits</b>	<b>Youth Contacts</b>	<b>Resolved Cases</b>	<b>Pending Cases</b>
16	113	51	25

Site Visits: Al Price State Juvenile Correctional Facility, Corsicana Residential Treatment Center, Crockett State School, Gainesville State School, Giddings State School, McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility Unit I, McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility Unit II, Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Facility Unit I, Byrd's Therapeutic Group Home (contract), Cottrell House (halfway house), Gulf Coast Trades Center (contract), McFadden Ranch (halfway house), Turman House (halfway house), and Willoughby House (halfway house).

Additionally, monitoring visits were conducted at the Dallas, Houston, Tyler, and Waco District Offices.

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## OIO Staff Training

OIO staff participated in professional trainings on the following topics:

- OIO Orientation, Procedures and Policy Manual Training
- TYC Youth Community Connections Conference
- Motivational Interviewing

## Working Groups

OIO staff is currently involved in the following inter-agency groups:

- TYC Parole Re-Entry
- Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), Harris County and Dallas County
- TYC Medical Services Committee
- Texas Juvenile Justice Roundtable
- Release Review Panel Workgroup

## Special Projects

The Office of the Ombudsman continues to establish in-service and “on-going” training models.

The office also implemented a new initiative to establish and maintain communication with legislative offices involved in the criminal justice process. In an effort to build those relationships, the staff attended meetings and conferences with Criminal Justice Board members and met with two state senators and two state representatives.

In addition, the office made progress to work towards bringing all effected parties together for the Memorandum of Understanding between the Texas Youth Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman.

### III. Trends Observed as a Result of Site Visits and Research Conducted by the Office of the Independent Ombudsman

**Youth not attending school regularly:** Youth at several facilities report that they are not attending school regularly, either due to teachers not coming to work or youth behavior causing cancellation of classes. Staff report that schools are receiving credit for attendance, but after the official daily attendance is taken, school is cancelled, often for the remainder of the day. The OIO has reported these concerns to TYC’s central office and the administrators of the facilities who are taking the necessary corrective action to ensure the youth are receiving the appropriate educational services. This is an issue the OIO will continue to monitor.

**Youth on ReDirect Plans not receiving services:** Youth who are housed in security on a ReDirect Plan have reported that they are not receiving all required services, to

include education and recreation. A ReDirect Plan (RDP) is an intensive behavior modification program used as an intervention for youth who have engaged in serious rule violations. TYC policy requires that youth on an RDP receive 5 ½ hours of education services on scheduled academic days. The OIO is working with the administrators of the facilities to make certain policies and procedures in place are followed through with these particular youth.

#### **IV. Recommendations to Improve the Effectiveness of TYC and the OIO**

- Simplify OIO promotion and contact information for greater OIO visibility and availability.
- Schedule and conduct site visits with greater frequency and document in timely reports.
- Continue to respond to individual complaints by youth, parents, and staff.

#### **V. Comments**

Submitted by John Moore:

A great deal of time was spent in this quarter completing the reorganization and restructure of the Office of the Independent Ombudsman. This was accomplished by conducting employment interviews and filling existing administrative and operational staff positions within the Office, as well as drafting, implementing, and providing training for a new OIO Policy Manual. A core of internal and external training models were established while offices were made operational and equipment was purchased. Additionally, an outreach program of personal visits with Senate and House members of the Criminal Justice Committee was established, with the goal of promoting better communications with all legislators involved in the TYC process. On August 31, 2010, I relinquished the office of Independent Ombudsman for the Texas Youth Commission to return to private life. I continue to assist the Governor's Office with the interview process for a replacement and hope that one will be appointed soon. The time I have spent with the Texas Youth Commission has been among the most rewarding and challenging of my public service career, and I wish the Commission and all of its dedicated members the best of luck. My family will continue to keep the Texas Youth Commission and the youth in its care in our thoughts and prayers. Good Luck, and God Bless.

John Moore