



October 7, 2025

Texas Board of Criminal Justice
PO Box 13084
Austin, TX 78711

Chairman Nichols and Board Members:

By way of introduction, the Texas Home School Coalition Association is a statewide advocacy organization for home educators, with more than 100,000 families on our mailing list. As the homeschool advocacy organization for the State of Texas, we work with state and federal agencies on issues related to home education. In fact, the state department of education, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), frequently refers calls they receive regarding home education to our organization for verification or resolution.

I am writing to you concerning the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's hiring practices, specifically in relation to job applicants who were homeschooled. This year, in January and April, THSC was contacted by two separate members of our association who informed us that, despite meeting all other eligibility requirements for employment at the TDCJ, their job applications for Correctional Officer roles were ultimately rejected, solely due to the fact that their parent-issued homeschool high school diplomas were considered illegitimate by the TDCJ's Staffing Department. These applicants were informed that, in order to be eligible for employment at the TDCJ, they would either need to obtain a GED or graduate from an "accredited" homeschool program—something that does not exist in Texas.

Such practices are directly contrary to the TDCJ's own hiring policy—as adopted by the Texas Board of Criminal Justice in 2007¹ and still currently reflected in PD-73—which explicitly acknowledges the validity of homeschool diplomas for Correctional Officer applicants. Over the past several months, THSC has repeatedly attempted to resolve this issue in good faith, but we have been met with unresponsiveness, delays, and unwillingness to engage from the TDCJ.

On April 11, 2025, and May 14, 2025, THSC sent letters to the TDCJ's Staffing Department addressing this matter, but we received no response to either letter. Therefore, we submitted an open records request in May to verify whether the TDCJ is rejecting parent-issued homeschool diplomas. We received the following confirmation from the CO Staffing Department that only "accredited" diplomas are accepted:

¹ https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/documents/tbcj/TBCJ_Summary_2007-05.pdf



“We utilize the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) standards for verifying home school eligibility. We do accept if CHEA approved with an affidavit. Yes, all schools must be accredited.”

THSC also inquired in this open records request as to whether PD-73 is “still in effect as the governing rule related to eligibility for correctional officer applicants.” In response, the TDCJ Employee Services confirmed that *“all PD’s are on our website and the current PD-73 shows September 1, 2015.”*

Soon after, we called the TDCJ’s Staffing Department in order to verify whether our two letters had been received. A department supervisor confirmed that our letters were received and forwarded to the Office of General Counsel, which had determined that it was not necessary to change the TDCJ’s current hiring practices despite our letters.

We then sent another letter on June 10, 2025, directly to the Office of General Counsel. After receiving no response for several weeks, we followed up in July via phone call and email, requesting to arrange a call between the TDCJ’s General Counsel, Stephanie Greger, and THSC’s Vice President of Policy, Jeremy Newman. Our request was acknowledged on July 28, 2025, by the TDCJ’s Deputy General Counsel, who stated that he would discuss the matter with Ms. Greger.

Finally, on August 17, 2025, we received a letter signed by the General Counsel in response to our letter of June 10, 2025, stating the following: *“I am writing in response to your June 10th letter expressing concerns with TDCJ’s hiring practices. We have considered your position, but we are not recommending any changes to policy at this time and are declining any request to discuss this matter further.”*

Despite the General Counsel’s refusal to discuss this matter with our Vice President, THSC maintains that the TDCJ’s current hiring practices—namely, rejecting job applications from individuals with parent-issued homeschool diplomas, and requiring that homeschool diplomas must be issued by an “accredited” school in order to be eligible for employment—blatantly contradict the current PD-73 hiring policy adopted by the Board and published by the TDCJ, and also conflict with the state of Texas’s official position on the equivalency of homeschooling as specified by statute.

The September 1, 2015 version of TDCJ’s PD-73 (rev. 12), “Selection Criteria for Correctional Officer Application,” which was acknowledged as the current version by TDCJ Employee Services, states the following on page 3, under “Basic Eligibility Criteria”:

“All CO applicants, including non-correctional TDCJ employees applying for reassignment or being involuntarily demoted, including through a disciplinary action, resolution of a grievance, or Independent Dismissal Mediation, to a CO position, shall meet the following basic eligibility criteria to be employed as a CO:

...

*(C) Have graduated from an accredited senior high school **or equivalent** or obtained a state-issued General Educational Development (GED) certificate;*

*Acceptable documentation verifying graduation from an accredited senior high school **or equivalent** shall include: (1) a high school diploma from a state-accredited school, a school accredited by an organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education or the United States Department of Education, or any private school; or (2) **a high school diploma or transcript based on home schooling accompanied by a signed affidavit in which the applicant affirms the completion of high school via home schooling.**”²*

It is specified twice in this section that an “equivalent” to an accredited senior high school diploma is a separate way to satisfy the education requirement. According to the Texas Education Code, “*the State of Texas considers successful completion of a nontraditional secondary education to be equivalent to graduation from a public high school,*” with “nontraditional secondary education” defined as “*a course of study at the secondary school level in a nonaccredited private school setting, including a home school.*”³

Therefore, the Texas Education Code clearly states that graduation from a nonaccredited homeschool program is explicitly considered by the state of Texas to be “equivalent” to graduation from a public high school. Since PD-73 also states that an “equivalent” is acceptable, the TDCJ should recognize the validity of parent-issued homeschool diplomas, in accordance with the state of Texas’s position on this matter.

Furthermore, the decisive point is that although (C)(1) requires accreditation, (C)(2) is an entirely distinct and alternative provision specifically pertaining to job applicants who were homeschooled. Unlike (C)(1), (C)(2) does not even mention or refer to accreditation in any way—(C)(2) only requires a homeschool diploma or transcript along with a signed affidavit.

To demonstrate the contrast between the TDCJ’s actual policy and their current practices, we quote once again the Staffing Department’s response to THSC’s open records request in May:

² <https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/hr/documents/hr-policy/pd-73.pdf>

³ <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.51.htm#51.9241>



“We utilize the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) standards for verifying home school eligibility. We do accept if CHEA approved with an affidavit. Yes, all schools must be accredited.”

Clearly, the TDCJ is choosing to focus exclusively on (C)(1)—which is not specific to homeschooled applicants—while completely disregarding (C)(2), as well as the provisions that separately allow for “equivalent” forms of secondary education, which would include parent-led homeschooling.

Finally, it is not even possible for a homeschool in Texas to be “accredited,” as the TEA clearly states on its website:

“The TEA does not regulate, index, monitor, approve, register, or accredit the programs available to parents who choose to home school.”⁴

In light of this fact, requiring that a homeschool diploma be “accredited” is an *ipso facto* disqualification of all homeschool graduates in Texas. For this reason, until recently, the TDCJ long adhered to the current policy outlined above in PD-73, as well as in earlier versions of this policy going back to 2007, which plainly allow for homeschool applicants to demonstrate eligibility without accreditation.

Since the TDCJ has explicitly acknowledged receipt of THSC’s previous correspondence, in which we explained all these points and directly quoted their own policy, and since the TDCJ is now refusing to engage with us despite our repeated attempts at good-faith dialogue, THSC can only assume that the TDCJ is knowingly and intentionally continuing these punitive hiring practices against homeschooled applicants for the specific purpose of discriminating against them.

THSC exists to protect the freedom of homeschool families in Texas, and it is our intention to pursue all necessary means to remedy what appears to be outright, intentional, unrepentant discrimination by the TDCJ against homeschool families as a class.

We respectfully request that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice exercise its authority to require that the TDCJ adhere to its own published hiring policy in this regard, which was adopted by the Board and which has been on the books for nearly 20 years in PD-73.

We greatly appreciate your time and attention to this issue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

⁴ http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/General_Information/Finding_a_School_for_your_Child/Home_Schooling/



Best Regards,

Jeremy Newman

Jeremy Newman, JD, VP of Policy & Litigation

CC: Office of the Governor; TDCJ Executive Director Bobby Lumpkin; TDCJ General Counsel Stephanie Greger; Chairman John Smithee, Texas House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence; Chairman Pete Flores, Texas Senate Committee on Criminal Justice; Chairman Bryan Hughes, Texas Senate Committee on Jurisprudence.