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Sunset Advisory Commission adopts final recommendations for upcoming legislative session

In September, the Sunset Advisory Commission completed a year's work when it issued a [final report](#) with recommendations for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, Windham School District and Correctional Managed Health Care Committee. The Sunset review process began with TDCJ and other agencies submitting a self-evaluation report to the Commission, followed by numerous meetings with and site visits by Sunset staff. Once Sunset staff issued their report and recommendations, the Commission met in a public hearing to consider agency and public responses. Then, in a subsequent public hearing conducted during September, Commission members decided which recommendations would be presented to the Legislature.

The Commission adopted most of the preliminary [recommendations](#) proposed by staff; with the following modifications (only those changes pertaining to TDCJ are shown):

- The Commission recommends that the next Sunset review of TDCJ and the other criminal justice agencies be performed in eight years rather than 12 years.
- The proposed restructuring of the Correctional Managed Health Care Committee (CMHCC) as a committee to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice was modified to continue CMHCC as an independent state agency. In addition, the Commission recommends TDCJ report to the Legislature any cost savings achieved by contracting with health care providers other than the University providers.
- The recommendation to authorize TCI sales of offender-made goods to vendors contracting with TDCJ for the operation of secure correctional facilities was not adopted.
- A request for a legislative study examining the current method of providing health insurance for CSCD staff and retirees was adopted as a new issue.

All of these recommendations will be drafted into a bill and introduced during the upcoming 83rd Legislative session which convenes in January 2013. TDCJ Executive Director Brad Livingston said the Texas Department of Criminal Justice looks forward to working with the Legislature and the Commission in regards to all the recommendations, noting that the suggestions are intended to make the criminal justice system, which Sunset staff found to be working well, work even better. ●