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CRIMINAL JUSTICE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Budget Writers Agree to First Texas Prison Closure

by Brandi Grissom | 19 hours ago

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KEYWORDS: Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF)



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photo by: Caleb Bryant Miller

Lawmakers working on a final version of the state's two-year budget have agreed to close down a Texas prison for the first time in the state's history, according to a press release from the [Texas Public Policy Foundation](#).

The foundation lauded the budget agreement both for shuttering the [Central Unit](#) in Sugar Land and for minimizing cuts to programs that help offenders stay out of prison.

Closing the Central Unit would save an estimated \$50 million over two years, and it's

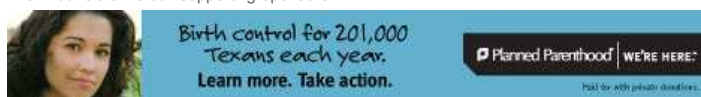
a move the growing Houston suburb has long [asked](#) lawmakers to approve. The prison unit sits in the middle of Sugar Land, and near the city's airport, where city leaders would prefer to see business development.

"The conference committee budget continues Texas' recent progress in emphasizing cost-effective sanctions and treatment in the community for nonviolent offenders, which has led to an 8 percent decline in the state's incarceration rate since 2004, and most importantly, an 11 percent drop in the serious crime rate over this period," said [Marc Levin](#), director of TPPF's Center for Criminal Justice.

Levin said the budget ensures that criminal justice reforms that lawmakers initiated in 2007 would continue. And he said a recent Texas Department of Criminal Justice [report](#) that noted significant reductions in recidivism shows that those programs are working.

[View the Tribune's interactive prison database [here](#).]

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