



DAN PATRICK

SENATOR ★ DISTRICT 7

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Patrick and Whitmire Collaborate on Prison Seminary Project
Senators Announce the Opening of Texas' First Prison Seminary

AUSTIN-- Senators Patrick and Whitmire will join TDCJ Executive Director Brad Livingston on Monday, August 29 to launch Texas' first seminary operated within a prison.

A convocation ceremony for the inaugural 40 inmates who have been accepted to the program is scheduled for 3 p.m. Monday, Aug. 29 at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's Darrington Unit, 59 Darrington Unit Road, in Rosharon. Sen. Patrick will be available for interviews at 2:00.

The seminary is nondenominational program, sponsored by the TDCJ, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and the Heart of Texas Foundation. The school will train inmates who are serving lengthy sentences to become ministers. After completing the 125 credit-hour program over four years, the inmates will receive a Bachelors of Science degree in Biblical Studies and go to other Texas prison facilities where they will minister to their fellow offenders.

"The seminary program has the potential to help these men change their thought patterns, which in turn can change their lives, and the lives of everyone around them," said TDCJ Executive Director Brad Livingston. "We are proud to be a part of this innovative program, and we expect great results."

"This is an exciting project that will inspire incarcerated offenders to accomplish a goal that will give them hope for the future," said Senator Patrick. "I am very pleased to have worked with Senator Whitmire in enhancing our prison system while rehabilitating our inmates."

"The opportunity to provide education and growth for those in a prison unit...is the opportunity to enable these inmates to discover a significant new way that through study will change life, perspective and hope for hundreds," said Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The program comes at no cost to taxpayers – it is being funded through grants and donations, including a donation from the Heart of Texas Foundation for the establishment of a theological library at Darrington. It is patterned after a similar program at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, which has been credited with a 70 percent reduction in inmate violence since its inception in 1995.

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