

Gov. Bush signs three crime bills into law

□ The legislation includes measures to limit death row appeals and create gun-free school zones.

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. George W. Bush on Wednesday signed into law a package of criminal justice legislation, including measures to limit appeals of death row inmates and create weapon-free zones around schools.

"These new laws will help get career criminals and drug dealers off our streets and away from our schools," Bush said. "They will make Texas safer for all our citizens."

At a new state jail facility in San Antonio, Bush also signed bills fine-tuning the penal code and changing Texas Department of Criminal Justice rules regarding inmate privileges.

The law limiting death row appeals aims to shave about two years off inmates' stays on death row and save taxpayers about \$50,000 per inmate, according to the governor's office.

Texas' 401 death row inmates have waited an average of eight years between conviction and execution. Some inmates have been on death row nearly 20 years.

The new law alters the timetables and deadlines for inmate appeals.

It also requires habeas corpus appeals and direct appeals to be

filed at the same time to allow the appeals court to consider them concurrently.

Bush's office estimated the law would save the state about \$1 million a year.

"Murderers who are sentenced to death will no longer be able to endlessly delay justice by repeatedly filing court appeals," Bush said.

Bush also signed a law establishing weapon-free zones around schools.

Anyone carrying a weapon

within 300 feet of a school or official school function will be prosecuted for a state jail felony, instead of a class A misdemeanor, under the law.

The penal code revision eliminates automatic probation for repeat offenders in the state jail system, which was created in 1993.

Under previous law, anyone repeatedly caught for a state jail offense received probation as punishment.

The law also toughens penalties for repeat felony offenders who enter the state jail system. A state jail felon who had two prior felony convictions can now be sentenced as a habitual offender and serve up to 20 years in prison.



Bush

DIVERSITY: Program to utilize new educational technologies

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Both officials encouraged minority participation.

Mauro said minority students should have access to opportunities like the Pipeline program, for the sake of the students, as well as businesses nationwide.

"How can America compete in the international economy if a woman, a black or a Hispanic who has all the tools to be a top-flight Ph.D. engineer ends up digging ditches or washing dishes?" Mauro said. "We can't be competitive and waste our best brains because they come from the wrong part of the state."

Thompson said the program is diverse because of the varying ethnic compositions of the four campuses. A&M-Kingsville and A&M-Corpus Christi graduate a large number of Hispanic students, while Prairie View A&M graduates a large number of African-Americans, he said.

"We feel like it's very important because, according to research, these students who stay in the educational process without dropping out to pursue vocations or avocations are more likely to complete a doctoral program," Thompson said.

Mauro said the General Land Office will give the program \$1.5 million each year for the next five years.

The program will utilize new educational technologies such as technology transfer and long-distance learning, which will use

interactive and video technology to teach a class at several different campuses. Texas A&M already has 43 teleconferencing sites and soon will add more, Thompson said.

Thompson offered a scenario for the class. "It will be possible to offer an engineering course or program in environmental engineering at A&M and then beam it to Texas A&M-Corpus and Texas A&M-Kingsville," Thompson said. "And some of our courses will originate in Kingsville and Corpus Christi."

Jim Bonner, associate professor of civil engineering at Texas A&M and project director, said the program also will benefit the state, because the technology used in the program is vital to cleaning the oil spills that often strike the Texas coast.

"To date, there is no proven technology to remediate spilled oil and [contaminated] wetlands," Bonner said. "These are extremely sensitive environments vital to aquatic inhabitants. They cannot be cleaned by traditional oil-remediation technologies."

Mauro said that since a large percentage of all imported oil comes through Texas, Texans should have the technology to handle any emergency.

"America imports about half of its oil," Mauro said. "Sixty percent of that oil comes through Texas ports. That means we are at risk of having the biggest, most catastrophic oil spills in the world, right here on our Texas coastline. So we have to be ready to handle oil spills."

Mauro added that there are 1,600 oil spills in the marine and coastal areas of Texas every year. Most are small and are handled by small businesses licensed by the General Land Office, he said.

Much of the research will focus on bioremediation, which uses microorganisms to "digest" spilled oil. Bonner, who recently returned from Russia where he lectured scientists about his research, said he is involved currently in a three-phase project on the San Jacinto River, which was ravaged

"This program has provided a field-scale testing facility that is a living environment and laboratory."

— Jim Bonner
associate professor of civil engineering at Texas A&M


when pipelines burst after flooding in the area in October 1994.

Bonner said that the river project, which is part of the Pipeline program, has given researchers opportunities that were never before possible.

"This program has provided a field-scale testing facility that is a living environment and laboratory," Bonner said. "The results of our studies have national and international significance which can improve how oil spills are handled worldwide."

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ARTS 350:	Arts and Civilization Prof. Paolo Baruchieri
ANTH 201:	Introduction to Anthropology Dr. Sylvia Grider
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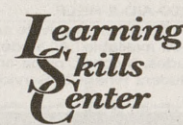
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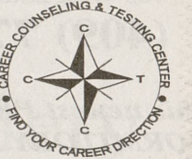
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Students may schedule an appointment with an academic or career counselor to discuss concerns related to choice of major, career, or academic difficulties they are experiencing.

Workshops

Choosing a Major

Learn how your interests, skills, values, and personality fit various majors and career options. Requires completion of testing prior to workshop. Offered Wednesdays from 2:15 - 4:00 p.m.

June 17	July 5	August 2
June 21	July 19	

Conquering Your Finals

Planning ahead is essential for performing well on final exams. Learn how to manage time, stress, and test preparation during the hectic final days of each semester. Offered Thursdays from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

June 29	August 3
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Study Survival/Learning Tactics

Did you breeze through high school without ever learning how to study? This workshop will cover the basics of taking notes, reading textbooks, time management and test preparation. Offered Thursdays from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

June 8	July 13
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Test Anxiety/Test Preparation

Is your GPA lower than you'd like? Learn test preparation and test taking techniques that reduce anxiety and improve performance. Offered Thursdays from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

June 15	July 20
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Time Management/Procrastination

Balancing school AND a social life can be tough. Learn how to manage your time with a schedule that makes room for both. Offered Thursdays from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

June 22	July 27
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Using Your Interests in Career Decision Making

Provides interpretation of interest inventory scores and applies this information to choosing a major and/or career planning. Requires completion of testing prior to workshop. Offered Mondays from 3:45 - 5:00 p.m.

June 12	July 10
June 26	July 24

Academic and Career Self-Help Resource Areas

The Career Counseling & Testing Center and Learning Skills Center contain numerous handouts, cassettes, videos, books, and computer programs that address a variety of concerns from career choice to study habits. All self-paced material can be accessed from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. No appointment is required to use these materials.

Career Counseling & Testing Center

The mission of the Career Counseling & Testing Center is to promote student development and self-knowledge which results in fulfilling career choices. Career exploration and planning, counseling, and testing help students make decisions tailored to their own unique combination of interests, abilities, values, and personality characteristics.

Pre-registration for workshops, computerized career guidance program, and counseling is requested.

For further information, contact the Student Counseling service at 845-4427, ext. 108 or come by 114 Henderson Hall.

Learning Skills Center

The Learning Skills Center has a mission of assisting students in developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes which will enhance their study and test-taking abilities, while decreasing anxieties related to academic performance.