

Criminal Justice

Dear Editor:

Recent criminal events in our state and nationally leave many of us wondering why these things happen and if our society can ever change for the better. It is a fitting time to recognize unsung heroes in our community who not only work every day to help people and families navigate difficult life transitions, but also work to solve the complex problems brought on by economic hardship or poor health.

Currently in Texas, social workers are becoming more involved in the criminal justice system, specifically within the courts. For example, the Downtown Austin Community Court, a new model of the current-day Municipal Court, is making efforts towards improving the community's quality of life and public order through effective and creative sentencing of misdemeanor offenders. The acting Court Administrator, who oversees clerical and rehab teams, is a master's level, licensed social worker.

The Community Court for the City of Dallas is committed to providing offenders with the means and encouragement to discontinue their criminal behavior, whether through treatment, or through means of restitution for the harm caused to the community. These services would not be efficiently provided without the oversight and coordination of two social workers employed by the Court.

Social workers are the "Bootstraps of Texas!" By helping our citizens find a way back to a peaceful and law-abiding life, they make our communities a better place to live for all of us. Please honor their service by compensating them fairly and recognizing their contributions.

Sincerely,