



To solve the turnover crisis at DFPS, restoring whistleblower protections is key

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services continues to operate in a turnover crisis caused by the toxic work environment inside the agency, high caseloads, and pay disparities within the agency. Resolving these issues are crucial to solving the turnover problem in DFPS.

Despite well documented, systemic issues related to the DFPS work environment, agency leaders have allowed the problems to grow by stripping due process and whistleblower protections from employees. Restoring these safeguards is critical to stabilizing the DFPS workforce.

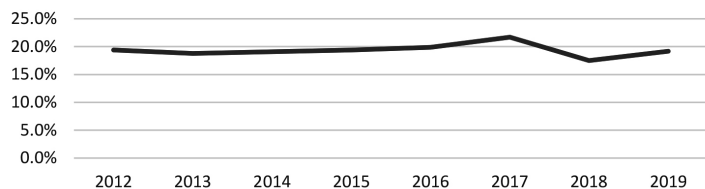
HHSC Eliminates Due Process And Whistleblower Protections in May, 2017

“The agency is not required to have these protections”

In May, 2017, the Health and Human Services Commission that DFPS operated under delivered a dramatic blow to public transparency and accountability. HHSC eliminated due process and whistleblower protections without legislative approval or oversight. The radical change affected all agencies under HHSC but is particularly significant to DFPS workers, who are operating in what has been documented as a punitive, toxic work environment. The change adds to the stress of an already tremendously stressful job where workers do not feel supported by management and contributes to the erosion of the working conditions at DFPS.

Without due process, whistleblowers who report on waste, fraud and abuse within the agency are vulnerable to retaliation from rogue supervisors. HHSC has said that they eliminated due process because it is not a requirement. However, it is increasingly evident that restoring these protections is part of the solution to the turnover crisis at DFPS.

FPS Turnover



DFPS CPS Operational Review Phase 1: Assessment and Findings

“Employees are working under stress and in fear in order to avoid penalties or termination”

An operational review of CPS by the Stephens Group, released in April, 2014, stated that workers were under extreme pressure to meet tracking numbers and metrics. Under the heading “Metrics are used to discipline workforce, not as a tool to inform decisions,” the report states that the agency “creates a culture of fear” and notes that workers routinely report management methods as “unfair, unsupportive, bullying, unreasonable, and fear-driven.”

DFPS Exit Surveys: DFPS Workers Departing the Agency Give Cause

Turnover again on the rise, “Poor working conditions” and “issues with supervisor” top list

Following the announcement of a \$12,000 pay raise for selected positions in the agency in December, 2016, a decrease in turnover immediately followed for those positions. However, this impact on turnover is already eroding after just 2 years.

In FY 2018 the turnover in the agency as a whole rose by 1.8% (from 18.4% to 20.2%), and in the first quarter of FY 2019 the turnover rate had increased another 1.2% (to 21.4%). Moreover, in FY 2018, the top two reasons reported by workers leaving the agency were “poor working conditions” (25.7%) and “Issues with my supervisor” (19.7%) – these two reasons combined add up to 45.4%, edging toward half of the employees exiting the agency citing a toxic environment at work.

	CPS Worker I	All CPS Workers	APS Worker I	All APS Workers	SWI Worker I	All SWI Workers
fy2018	35.3%	19.6%	50.8%	23.4%	69.8%	16.2%
1 st quarter fy2019	41.4%	21.4%	46.9%	23.9%	54.5%	21.1%

TSEU asks that you support legislation establishing uniform due process procedures across all state agencies