

Proclamation: Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month, April 2024

Whereas, every child deserves to grow up in a safe, loving permanent home where his or her physical, emotional and educational needs are fully met thereby giving the child an opportunity to realize his or her full potential;

Whereas, preventing child abuse and neglect is a community epidemic that depends upon the education and involvement of citizens from every sector of the community;

Whereas, in 2023, 58,210 children in Texas, including 53 in Waller County were confirmed as victims of abuse or neglect;

Whereas, 30,425 or 53 percent of those children in Texas were under the age of six years old;

Whereas, in 2023, there were 173 child abuse-related fatalities in Texas; when even one child's death is too many;

Whereas, in 2023, 30,739 children in Texas, including 29 in Waller County, were in the care and custody of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services because of evidence of abuse and neglect;

Whereas, a child's journey in the child protection system can be traumatic and overwhelming as that child has been removed from his or her home and placed with strangers often in a different county away from his or her school, friends, place of worship and the only life they have ever known;

Whereas, the impact of abuse and neglect has long-term personal, economic and social costs; therefore, hurting Texas' future;

Whereas, Court Appointed Special Advocates® – CASA Advocates – are assigned by the court to speak up for a child's best interest and be a voice for that child in the courts;

Whereas, every child in care deserves a CASA Advocate, but half the children in care do not have a CASA Advocate;

Whereas, CASA for Kids of South Central Texas, Child Protective Services, Waller County Child Welfare Board, Child Advocacy Centers, Foster Parents, Teachers and others work to ensure that children in our community have the opportunity to grow up in safe, loving permanent homes;

Therefore, I hereby proclaim April as Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month in Washington County and commend all organizations, including CASA for Kids of South Central Texas, CASA Volunteer Advocates, Child Protective Services staff and Waller County Child Welfare Board for their commitment and dedication to preventing abuse and mitigating the devastating effect of abuse and neglect by serving children who have been victimized.

I further call upon all citizens, community agencies, faith groups, schools, government agencies and businesses to increase their participation in efforts to support families and prevent child abuse, thereby strengthening our entire community on this, the 17th Day of April 2024.

Carbett "Trey" J. Duhon III
Waller County Judge

John A. Amsler, Commissioner, Pct. 1

Walter E. Smith Commissioner, Pct.2

Kendric D. Jones Commissioner, Pct. 3

Justin Beckendorff, Commissioner, Pct. 4