



# Texas

## Department of Public Safety

Information for the News Media  
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### **DPS Warns Parents that the Mexican Cartels are Recruiting Texas High School Students**

Six of the seven Mexican Cartels have established command and control networks in Texas and they are recruiting Texas students to support their drug, human, currency and weapon smuggling operations on both sides of the Texas/Mexico border. These Cartels and their operatives are extremely violent, torturing and killing thousands of people in Mexico, and they use transnational and Texas prison gangs to further their criminal operations in Mexico and the U.S.

The Texas border region represents 9.7% of the state's population, yet this region has 19.2% of the state's Juvenile Felony drug referrals and 21.8% of the state's Juvenile Felony Gang Referrals. In one Texas border county, more than 25 juveniles have been arrested for drug trafficking within the past year. Last month, two Texas teenagers were lured to Mexico where they were kidnapped, beaten, ransomed and released in a remote area along the Rio Grande River. Last week, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) apprehended a 12-year-old boy in a border county driving a stolen pickup truck containing more than 800 pounds of marijuana.

"Mexican Cartels have corrupted nearly an entire generation of youth living in Northern Mexico and they seek to corrupt our youth as well to further their smuggling operations" said Steven C. McCraw, DPS Director. "The Mexican Cartels value Texas teenagers for their ability to serve as expendable labor in many different roles and they have unlimited resources to recruit our children."

Parents should talk to their children and explain how the Cartels seek to exploit Texas teenagers and the risks in dealing with these ruthless organizations, especially those parents who live along the Texas/Mexico border.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection developed Operation Detour, an educational campaign warning high school students of the consequences of becoming involved with smuggling.

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