



## HARRIS COUNTY DEPUTIES' ORGANIZATION

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July 28, 2017

To: The Harris County Commissioner's Court

Attn: Judge Ed Emmitt

Commissioner Rodney Ellis

Commissioner Jack Mormon

Commissioner Steve Radack

Commissioner R. Jack Cagle

Dear Honored Judge and Commissioners,

The Harris County Deputies' Organization is adamantly seeking a much needed pay increase for Harris County Sheriff's Deputies as well as better working conditions for Harris County Detention Officers. With all the perils of our region, with smuggling, gangs, and property crimes on the rise, the choice of whether to have the best people on the front lines is a choice Harris County cannot afford not to make. We ask that you consider the included data and have an open conversation with us about this matter.

The statistical tables and graphs included with this letter show that a Harris County Deputy on average would need a 23.81% pay increase to be at the same pay as equally licensed and ranked Officers with the Texas Department of Public Safety, Dallas, Plano, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, and Houston Police Departments. The starting salary at the Sheriff's Office for a deputy is \$44,862 whereas at the Houston Police Department, after the probation period, a rookie officer stands to make \$51,318. On average, Deputies would need a 21.93% pay increase to be at the same pay as the other surveyed jurisdictions but we are asked to serve a larger population (excluding the Houston Police Department) in a larger geographic area with the same hazards, responsibilities, and community outreach as all the other large Texas municipalities. The gap for experienced personnel is also significant with Sheriff Deputy Sergeants needing an 18.44% raise to be at the same pay as the sampled department Sergeants on average. Lieutenants would need a 19.07% raise to be at the average and Captains need a 20.21% increase to be at their counterparts pay, on average. How can the Sheriff's Office expect to recruit, train, and develop the exemplary Deputies that are needed for Harris County when the pay and benefits that are offered force Deputies to seek employment in other better paying agencies?

Our proposal is to for the pay for Sheriff's Deputies be brought at least to the average of the attached pay study allowing for the overall pay to increase at every stage but also increasing the start pay for new Deputies. It is imperative that the starting pay per Deputy be increased in order to recruit the best pool of candidates into the Sheriff's Office ranks as well as maintaining a competitive average so that trained law enforcement will spend their careers with Harris County.

We are also seeking that the working conditions for Detention Officers be addressed. As it stands today, Detention Officers often are forced to work significant overtime, due to lack of staffing,

which leads to high rates of burnout and turnover. Additionally, Detention Officers should have parking provided for and not be one of the many expenses coming out of their pockets. The jail staffing needs to be addressed on all levels and we want a frank and honest conversation about how to improve working conditions through additional staff and to deal with parking for jail staff.

The task of serving and protecting all the citizens of Harris County is a monumental undertaking, but a very necessary one. Serving and protecting is a task that the men and woman of the Sheriff's Office willingly take on and shall never shirk from, but, like all employees we may question if we are being justly compensated for our service. During this time of state-wide law enforcement growth, the best and the brightest recruits, deputies, detention officers, and command staff are at a premium across the state. It is impossible for the Sheriff's Office to retain the high quality personnel that the job and the public demand when a Deputy in Harris County can easily make significantly more money for their families doing the same job for a different department elsewhere in the State. The job of law enforcement, with its training and responsibility, demands high quality candidates and it is what the community deserves. We are not asking for more, we are just asking to be paid the same as our peers across the state.

The increase in pay for all Sheriff Deputies is equal to about a dollar a month per Harris County citizen. That dollar a month is worth it for the safety each citizen deserves.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DCuevas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Cuevas, President

Harris County Deputies' Organization