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Senator Joan Huffman

Senate District 17

Senator Joan Huffman's Statement on Harris County Defunding Precinct 5 Constable Ted Heap's Office

“Today, Comptroller Glenn Hegar determined that Harris County slashed the 2023 fiscal year budget for Harris County Precinct 5 Constable Ted Heap's Office by over \$2.3 million. As author of Senate Bill 23 from the 87th Legislature, known as the Back the Blue Act, I am encouraged that the process established to prevent law enforcement agencies from being defunded by out-of-touch local governments is working as intended.

“Law enforcement agencies should not have to worry about having the appropriate resources to keep communities safe. The 87th Legislature passed the Back the Blue Act with a supermajority from both houses because public safety is not a partisan issue. Because Judge Lina Hidalgo and the Harris County Commissioners Court did not receive voter approval to cut the Precinct 5 Constable's budget in accordance with Senate Bill 23, the county may not adopt an ad valorem tax rate that exceeds the county's no-new-revenue tax rate until correction action is taken. Harris County residents have been pleading their local officials to increase public safety measures, but this financial action by the county's leadership will only make the community less safe. Harris County must restore this vital funding immediately, or the county will be forced to comply with the consequences outlined in the Back the Blue Act for their misguided and unwarranted decision to defund the Constable's office.”

(Senator Joan Huffman represents District 17, which is comprised of Colorado, Jackson, Matagorda, and Wharton County and portions of Brazoria, Ft. Bend, Harris, and Waller County. Huffman currently serves as Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, Chair of the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting, as a senior member of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice and the Legislative Budget Board.)

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