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Joan Huffman
Senator ★ District 17

Senator Huffman Filed Legislation to Prevent Rogue Local Officials from Defunding the Police & to Increase Police Transparency

AUSTIN- Senator Joan Huffman (R-Houston) filed legislation today to stop local governments from slashing police budgets without prior voter approval. Senate Bill 23, known as the "Back the Blue Act", will ban local officials from cutting law enforcement funding without voter approval. If local officials do not seek voter approval prior to decreasing law enforcement resources, or simply disregard the voters' voice, that municipality or county will be prohibited from raising taxes.

"When it comes to public safety, Texans have a right to have their opinions heard on decisions that directly impact the safety of their community and family," said Huffman. "Unfortunately, we have seen local officials attempt to cut law enforcement funding to score political points, without regard for the consequences." By decreasing law enforcement resources and support, out-of-control local officials endanger our communities and the law enforcement officers who protect us on a daily basis. "Texans deserve to feel safe in their own communities, and Senate Bill 23 guarantees that local voters have input in these critical decisions."

In an effort to increase transparency and hold law enforcement accountable, Senator Huffman also filed Senate Bill 24, the "Law Enforcement Transparency Act." Though Texas already holds its law enforcement officers to a higher professional standard than most other states, we must continue to pursue public policy that ensures accountability and instills public confidence in the brave individuals who protect our communities. Senate Bill 24 will further this goal by ensuring that law enforcement officials are held accountable for the officers they choose to hire.

"It is an honor and a privilege to wear the peace officer badge in Texas, so law enforcement agencies must be diligent and transparent in their efforts to select the most qualified individuals to serve our local communities," said Huffman. Senate Bill 24 will bring much-needed transparency to the peace officer hiring process and will establish procedures that the public will have confidence in. No longer will law enforcement agencies be able to hire unruly or unethical officers fired by other agencies without being held accountable. "Law enforcement officers continue to tell me that they want to weed out the bad apples just as much as the public, and this legislation will do just that."

"Senate Bills 23 and 24 illustrate my continued support for the men and women in law enforcement throughout this State. At a time when police are often ostracized merely for wearing the badge, we must continue to convey that we are thankful for their service and sacrifice and that Texans have their backs."

(Senator Joan Huffman represents District 17, which includes portions of Brazoria, Fort Bend and Harris counties. Huffman currently serves as Chair of the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting, Chair of the Senate Committee on Jurisprudence, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, and as a senior member of the Senate Committee on Finance, Administration, and Legislative Budget Board. Huffman and her family reside in Houston.)

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