

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 3021

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Hearing Date: April 6, 2021 10:00 AM

Marty Lucke, Judge

Floyd County

Floydada, TX

To never be able to change the budget of the County Sheriff causes an undo burden upon the tax payers of the County. Our County has around 5,000 population and we are contracted, by Inter Local Agreement, to provide law enforcement services for a municipality in our County. If that municipality decided to have their own police department, Floyd County would have twice the number of Deputies that we need and the taxpayers of the municipality and the County would be paying for law enforcement that wasn't needed. Some years we have to purchase 1 patrol vehicle, some years 3 and some years more, Having to budget for the maximum number of units needed every year is an unnecessary budget expense. If the budget for law enforcement must be the same every year then other services may have to be cut to keep from raising taxes. Another example would be when the bond for a jail is paid off, are we going to continue to tax for a bond that is paid off because we can't adjust the budget? Counties have always been strong supporters of law enforcement. Floyd County provides the best patrol units, safety equipment, weapons and training that we can afford. I fully understand the idea behind the legislation, however punishing everyone because some local governments are wanting to cut their law enforcement budgets is not the answer. The people in those locations continue to elect their local representatives (City Council Members and Commissioners) to serve on those government boards (City Councils and Commissioners Courts), let those people continue to get what they vote for. If they don't like what the governing board is doing, they can go to the ballot box and change it. Punishing governing bodies that support law enforcement for the problems of certain areas just doesn't make sense. The best form of government is the government that is closest to the people and it also the first and quickest to get changed.

Sandra Cox, Mayor

City of Lakeway

Lakeway, TX

The City of Lakeway is a community that supports and loves its police force and has never "defunded" the police. However, there are times when line items and personnel funds will change depending on the situation. For instance, if the city changes its medical insurance provider and saves money from the prior year, the personnel line item will drop dramatically. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the City of Lakeway budget is related to personnel expenditures. And, as Cities grow, service delivery changes. Just 2 years ago the police department had 2 canine patrols. One retired last year and another will transition to a bike patrol. The cost decreased as there were a number of canine related costs that do not carry forward. The City built a new police station which required overlapping of services and thus redundant costs to transition from the old facility to the new one. Year 2, those costs decreased. My point being, there are many factors that can change year to year that can increase or decrease a department's budget. Sometimes a reduction is just being fiscally responsible

Janet Imhoff

League of Women Voters of Texas

McKinney, TX

The League of Women Voters of Texas believes that no one wants to get rid of the police. However, we do believe local governments should retain the right to craft their own budgets. They should be able to hire other professionals, for example mental health professionals in addition to police officers, in order to promote public safety. These professionals would be a valuable addition to any police force, and would provide an important service that could actually protect the police from

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situations that are dangerous, and for which they have limited special training.
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