



# COMMISSIONERS COURT RECAP

APRIL 5, 2022

## COMMISSIONER RAMSEY'S NOTES

This week we discussed two failures of leadership.

First, we discussed items leading up to the public meeting on the Elections Administrator. This past court Elections Administrator Longoria requested to grow her staff and begin new projects. However, she turned in her resignation, effective July 2022, for failure to perform her duties adequately pertaining to an election. This should cancel out her privilege to run two more elections, much less, request additional funds and staff. This is why I voted against the polling locations, and have suggested that the Elections Commission immediately fire Longoria before the May 7th and 24th elections.

Second, we were presented with news about the major failures of the JWEB system for criminal justice data, which resulted in the release of hundreds of jail inmates. The causes of this failure are being investigated, but what we do know is that those with the knowledge to solve this problem no longer work for the department. It is widely known that the majority of the team that implemented JWEB no longer works for Universal Services (the County's I.T. department). Why were there not qualified, skilled individuals running JWEB and preparing for contingencies?

Every Court brings another moment, where another one of our bureaucratic administrators drops the ball. Whether it was a botched election, IT failures, understaffed jail, or defunding of law enforcement, an unelected bureaucrat was the common denominator. We need accountability if we want to earn back your faith in government. We can be better, and I'm committed to finding the best solutions. And that's not a soundbite, it's a promise.

## PRECINCT 3

- An item was approved that will allow Commissioner Ramsey to transfer funding for four positions with the Constable Eagleton of Precinct Three. (Note: commissioners maps and constables maps are drawn differently and do not share the same boundaries.)
- Commissioner Court received an update on the JWEB failure. JWEB is the data program for the criminal justice system, and it connects all aspects from officers to courts. The recent system failure caused hundreds of arrested individuals to be released from custody. The root causes were lack of a backup plan, insufficient systematic knowledge of JWEB, and data replication backup. Court approved action to investigate the root causes and create contingency plans for this situation.



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## COUNTYWIDE 5-0 VOTE

- Court received an update on the criminal court case backlog. Currently, there are over 60,000 cases that are over a year old. It is estimated that it will take 2 years to get through the backlog if all goes well. This is an unsustainable model for our justice system.
- Court reaffirmed the commitment to encourage entities that work with Harris County to adopt the updated ATLAS-14 flood regulations. With so many cities, school districts, MUDs, and other entities involved in flood control, it is critical we all use the same rules.
- Court, in a 4-0 vote (Judge Hidalgo abstained), approved additional funds for the District Attorney aimed at increasing staff retention and attracting top talent. The DA is the top law enforcement official in the County and should receive the same support as other law enforcement.
- Court passed resolutions for Child Abuse Prevention Month and National Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Resolutions are a way to bring awareness to an issue. We need to be aware that child abuse and sexual assault victims need our support, and we need to peruse and prosecute the criminals that commit such heinous crimes.
- Court approved the receipt of nearly \$9 million in rental assistance funds from the U.S. Treasury. These funds reduce the likelihood of homelessness and housing insecurity and also benefit landlords and the general economy.

## COUNTYWIDE SPLIT VOTE

- Commissioners Ramsey and Cagle opposed all items brought forth by the Elections Administrator based on a lack of confidence in Administrator Longoria. This included the transfer of \$2 million, hiring of a search firm before the Elections Commission has met, and creation of an election worker program.
- Commissioner Ramsey and Commissioner Cagle opposed the approval of department "carry forward" request. This is a repackaged version of the old rollover policy. When the rollover policy ended, tens of millions of dollars were taken from law enforcement control and given to the County Administrator.
- A motion to revoke the County Judge's emergency COVID powers failed 3-2. Commissioner Ramsey argued that voluntarily giving up such powers would serve as a symbol of where we are in the fight against COVID.