

July 17, 2018

Honorable Brian Birdwell
Chair, Sunset Commission
P. O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Chairman Birdwell,

Thank you for your service as Chair of the Sunset Commission. It has been brought to our attention that there will be discussions regarding the Commission's recommendations to close 87 Department of Public Safety (DPS) offices around the state.

We have been contacted by several county judges in our districts expressing their concern over their respective closures. The majority, if not all of the offices recommended for closure are the only DPS office located within the county.

As a state we made a commitment to provide services to all citizens, even those in the most rural areas. We have been told the dollar savings from the closing of the 87 offices would amount to approximately \$760,000. However, the wasted dollars and inefficiencies suffered by the citizens of these rural counties will in the long run exceed these savings.

Most citizens located in the counties recommended for closure are on an abbreviated schedule that the community understands, producing the maximum utilization of resources. Additionally, most rural citizens already drive many miles from home to their county office to receive those services. By closing these offices, it would mean these citizens would have to travel several counties away to receive services.

It is our understanding that the savings will go to provide more services in the larger mega centers due to unutilized or underutilized facility capacity. We believe that a comprehensive plan with consideration of all state and possible federal coordination of services to these communities is in order. There is no better time than now to have a comprehensive look at synergies, coordination and collaboration that could occur within these small communities if given proper attention.

Not only do these offices provide needed services, valued community citizens and quality employees, they also provide a level of safety to these areas by having a DPS office presence.

We would ask that the Commission carefully consider the full effect of the proposed changes to rural Texas. The loss of half of a workday during planting season, harvesting or the cost of down time is real. The obstacles facing our farming, ranching and oil and gas industry are numerous and varied in our global economy. For the state to create one more unnecessary obstacle in an already challenging environment does not represent the Texas we espouse to the world.

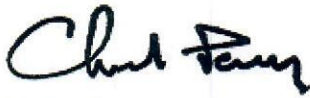
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Geography is a reality that our rural communities deal with daily. They do so willingly because of a lifestyle that produces two of the biggest budget drivers in the state budget: agriculture and energy production.

As we continue to see the urbanization of the state, and with the reduction of services, infrastructure, and healthcare to rural Texas to accommodate the urban services needs we are being, "penny wise, a pound foolish." Texas needs a strong, vibrant and viable rural community for its significant financial contributions to the State, but more importantly for the independent, risk taking, family and community-centered life that made Texas the greatest state in the union. Texas has an opportunity to reaffirm that no one citizen is more valued than another and we should not make one citizen whole at the expense of another one.

Thank you for your consideration.

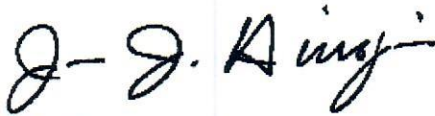
Respectfully,



Charles Perry
State Senator - District 28



Drew Springer
State Representative - District 68



Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
State Senator - District 20



James White
State Representative - District 19



Kel Seliger
State Senator - District 31



Tom Craddick
State Representative - District 82



José Rodríguez
State Senator - District 29



Pat Fallon
State Representative - District 106



Judith Zaffirini
State Senator - District 21



Trent Ashby
State Representative - District 57



Lois Kolkhorst
State Senator - District 18



Geanie W. Morrison
State Representative - District 30



Bryan Hughes
State Senator - District 1



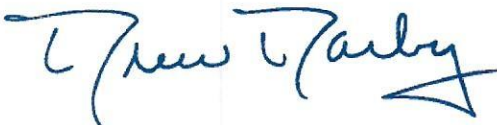
Ben Leman
State Representative - District 13



Ernest J. Bailes
State Representative - District 18



Cecil Bell, Jr.
State Representative - District 3



Drew Darby
State Representative - District 72



Gary VanDeaver
State Representative - District 1



Charles "Doc" Anderson
State Representative - District 56




Ken King
State Representative - District 88

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Ryan Guillen
State Representative - District 31



John P. Cyrier
State Representative - District 17



Tracy O. King
State Representative - District 80



Mike Lang
State Representative - District 60

cc:
Sunset Vice Chairman Chris Paddie
Senator Dawn Buckingham
Senator Bob Hall
Senator Robert Nichols
Senator Kirk Watson
Emily Pataki
Representative Dan Flynn
Representative Stan Lambert
Representative Poncho Nevarez
Representative Senfronia Thompson
Ronald G. Steinhart