

April 28, 2023

To:

The Honorable Joan Huffman
P.O. Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711

The Honorable Greg Bonnen
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

CC:

The Honorable Brandon Creighton
The Honorable Mary Gonzalez
The Honorable Jacey Jetton
The Honorable Lois Kolkhorst

The Honorable Robert Nichols
The Honorable Charles Schwertner
The Honorable Gary VanDeaver
The Honorable Amando Walle

Dear Chairwoman Huffman and Chairman Bonnen,

On behalf of the Dallas Regional Chamber and the companies each of us represent, we applaud your leadership in working on the 2024-2025 state budget. As business leaders, we know that informed fiscal decision making will be critical to taking advantage of the historic opportunity the Texas Legislature has this session to invest in our state's continued growth and prosperity.

Strong economies are built on strong communities – and building robust and trusted public safety systems in our communities is essential to ensuring Texas remains an attractive place to live, work, and do business.

In that spirit, we are writing to request your support for investing in the future of law enforcement training in Texas. Unlike many other cities across the country, Dallas has seen significant drops in violent crime since 2020 – as well as fewer arrests. The Dallas Police Department has become a model in data-driven policing that prioritizes community engagement.

However, the department's staffing and training needs have been hindered by the outdated Dallas Police Academy, built in 1990 as a temporary facility. We urge you to consider making a one-time, \$50 million appropriation in the budget for a state-of-the-art Regional Law Enforcement Training Center at the University of North Texas at Dallas.

Such an investment would not only make our regional law enforcement agencies stronger and more effective, it would also help Texas continue to position itself as a national leader in policing research and training.

Housing a new academy at UNT Dallas – one of the fastest-growing colleges in the country – would create a space to educate officers in a holistic, collaborative context. It would also further drive Texas' reputation for policing innovation and officer mental health by creating an operating base for the renowned Caruth Police Institute, Texas ABLE Center of Excellence, and Texas Law Enforcement Peer Network (TLEPN).

These programs address leadership development, policy, and reducing the impact of stressors and trauma that often lead to poor performance and health outcomes for officers. The programs would be complemented by virtual reality learning studios, community space, and an indoor below-ground 50-yard firing range.

As you and your colleagues consider improvements to public safety in Texas, we urge you to prioritize investing in the thoughtful solutions pioneered right here in the Dallas Region – solutions that allow the entrepreneurial spirit of all our police officers and community members to thrive.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration of this request, and for all you do for the State of Texas. Should you have any questions regarding the DRC's support of public safety investments, please do not hesitate to contact Matt Garcia, Senior Vice President of Public Policy, at mgarcia@dallaschamber.org or 214-746-6721.



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