

STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF POLK

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## RESOLUTION OF THE POLK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

### Immediate Funding Request for State Government Mandated Services

*Whereas*, Commissioners Courts continue to struggle to finance essential services under a 3.5 percent revenue cap, while the state has failed to meet its statutory obligations. State government mandated services threaten to overwhelm county resources with an escalating backlog of state felony inmates, mentally ill defendants, and felony juvenile offenders.

*Whereas*, TDCJ has been closing facilities and reducing its capacity while the state leadership has transferred funding from TDCJ for other programs. According to the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, the backlog of paper-ready state inmates awaiting transfer to TDCJ has increased from 1,521 in June 2021 to 3,608 in June 2022, a 137 percent increase in one year. At a rate of \$50 per day, these state inmates are costing local property taxpayers \$65,846,000 per year.

*Whereas*, the North Texas State Hospital in Vernon is the primary state facility to receive and treat criminal defendants who are incompetent to stand trial. When these defendants are denied admission to the state facilities, they must be confined in the county jail. This creates a danger to the other inmates and staff while depriving needed mental health services to these defendants. At this time, the North Texas State Hospital has completely stopped receiving new admissions. The backlog was already delaying transfer of these patients from the county jail to the state facility for two years for a violent offender and one year for all other patients. Even prior to this shutdown, with a total of 2,435 patients awaiting transfer in county jails at \$100 per day, this backlog was costing county taxpayers at least \$88,877,500 per year.

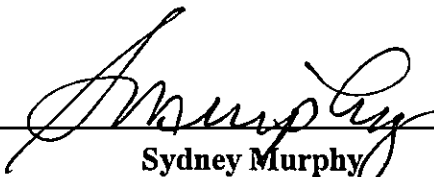
*Whereas*, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department is responsible for the incarceration and rehabilitation of felony juvenile offenders who are not suitable for the juvenile probation system. This includes violent offenders who cannot be safely housed with other juveniles. From its forced merger with the Texas Youth Commission to the present, this program under TJJD has experienced deficiencies in its operations and administration. This past month, the TJJD announced that it would refuse any new admissions. This is forcing counties to hold these serious offenders in facilities designed and staffed for non-violent offenders. This failure by the state exposes county staff and other juveniles to greater risk of injury or death while interrupting the rehabilitation of these other offenders. Each offender refused admission by TJJD will cost county taxpayers approximately \$250 per day for \$91,250 per year.

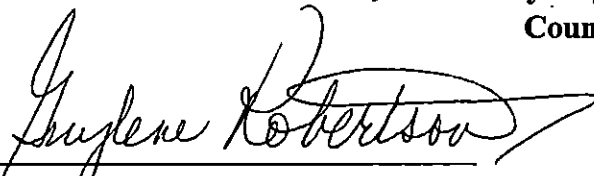
*Whereas*, these failures by state agencies to meet their statutory responsibility are the result of administrative neglect and lack of funding. While essential to the safety of our citizens, these

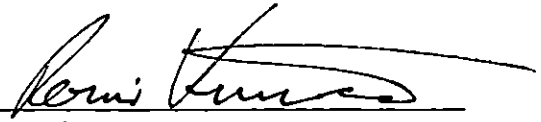
services are not considered a priority by the state. TDCJ funding has been transferred to other programs and facilities closed. After prior budget increases, mental health funding was reduced by 2 percent in the current state budget. The budget for TJJD was reduced by 5 percent before some interim relief for salaries. These state failures to meet its financial obligations have resulted in county property tax increases to provide these unfunded but mandated services in county jails and juvenile facilities. With an extraordinary increase in state revenue providing a \$27 billion surplus according to Comptroller Hegar, there is no excuse for continuing these backlogs.

*Therefore*, the Commissioners Court of Polk County, Texas, does hereby respectfully request immediate relief by action of the Legislative Budget Board to relieve this crisis by the transfer of sufficient state funds to meet these responsibilities.


**PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 25<sup>th</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER 2022.**

  
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**Sydney Murphy**  
County Judge

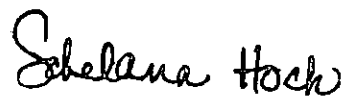
  
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**Guylene Robertson**  
Commissioner, Pct. 1

  
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**Ronnie Vincent**  
Commissioner, Pct. 2

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**Milton Purvis**  
Commissioner, Pct. 3

  
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**Charles T. Overstreet**  
Commissioner, Pct. 4

**Attest:**

  
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**(seal) Schelana Hock, County Clerk**

