



# NEWS RELEASE

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**Contact:**  
CLEAT Public Affairs  
E: [news@cleat.org](mailto:news@cleat.org)

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**For Immediate Release**  
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### **State's largest police union calls out Southeast Texas sheriff for violating constitutional rights of union members**

**AUSTIN** — The state's largest law enforcement labor union, the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas, or CLEAT, is calling upon Orange County Judge John Gothia and Orange County Commissioners to intervene and reverse punitive and oppressive actions by Sheriff Jimmy Lane Mooney against CLEAT affiliated local, Orange County Sheriffs Employee's Association, and that local union's elected leadership. Recent actions by Sheriff Mooney clearly illustrate his intent to retaliate against OCSEA leadership and the union for their recent contract negotiations with the county commissioners.

CLEAT Executive Director Charley Wilkison stated "the ink had barely dried from OCSEA President Dustin Bock and County Judge Gothia signing the most recent collective bargaining agreement when Sheriff Mooney began his oppression and punitive acts against the union leadership." These recent actions by the sheriff clearly violate commissioner court public assurances to OCSEA that there would be no retaliation or ill-treatment of local union members. The commissioners publicly resolved support of the local union's right and obligation to negotiate on behalf of its members and assurances were echoed by each commissioner against retribution during open court negotiations with the local association leadership.

The sheriff has effectively disrupted this union's operation and ability to represent its members by banishing local union leaders to the county jail in assignments that were newly created by the sheriff with the intent to punish the association president and treasurer by segregating these individuals to a lockdown environment. The sheriff obviously intends to subvert the first amendment freedoms of speech and association by the union leadership. These two association leaders made up the formal OCSEA bargaining team along with CLEAT lead negotiator, Craig Deats, and clearly disputed the sheriff's statement, in open court, regarding union consensus of his requested additions to the union contract that members were opposed to.

Both union leaders are accomplished investigators and were reassigned to positions created by the sheriff as punishment for associating with and speaking out on behalf of the local union. The sheriff's actions further illustrate a pattern of anti-union behavior which has required several union members to file grievances to protect their privileges under the contract. In late August, the sheriff canceled the deputies' take-home car benefit and stated they would not be returned until the union members voted on the collective agreement which empowered him by canceling appeal rights of employees for arbitrary job actions by the sheriff. Furthermore, when local union leadership committed to negotiate with county commissioners in an attempt to maintain their contractual benefits, the sheriff issued verbal threats to those on the union negotiations team and executive board of the union that he would and ultimately did cancel other benefits in violation of the collective bargaining agreement.