



NEWS RELEASE

Proudly Serving Texas' Finest

Contact:
CLEAT Public Affairs
E: news@cleat.org

ATTN: ALL AUSTIN AREA MEDIA OUTLETS
For Immediate Release
February 9, 2022

DA Garza Seeks to Use APD Officers as Scapegoat for Leadership Failures

To the Austin Community — By now, you have likely seen several local media outlets cover a story regarding District Attorney, Jose Garza's plans to present cases to the Travis County Grand Jury in an effort to indict over a dozen Austin Police Officers for actions stemming from the 2020 protests. Garza promised the community that he was going to indict and prosecute police officers. Unfortunately, he has earned his reputation by falsely indicting officers for political reasons rather than any criminal wrongdoing. The majority of these indicted officers have been cleared and returned to work after the Department determined that they didn't so much as violate APD policy.

There is absolutely no doubt that bean bags fired by officers severely injured protesters who were involved in rioting in the streets. What the media doesn't know is that Austin Police Department management knew or should have known that the bean bags being fired were expired and defective. Austin Police Department leadership was repeatedly made aware of the bean bag issues and declined to take action and replace the defective bean bag rounds.

These facts deserve to be brought forward because the city politicians are likely to blame rank and file officers and then seek to settle out of court in order to avoid exposure. It's also important that the community know because the Travis County District Attorney is seeking indictments of the Austin Police Officers who fired these rounds. Rank and file police officers have ZERO decision making authority over the manufacturing, purchasing, storage or deployment of any ammunition.

These incidents are a clear indictment on the department leadership. We can damn sure guarantee you that if the officers knew the rounds were expired and defective, they would have never used them. No APD patrol officer has ever been expected to disassemble issued beanbag rounds or any type of ammunition themselves to gauge their usability. This was a responsibility of department leadership.

The District Attorney seeking indictments of the officers in these cases is an overreach and a travesty of justice. We encourage the community and media to ask tough questions and don't automatically blame the young officers who spent hundreds of hours risking their lives protecting the city and keeping the interstate open during the riots as they were ordered to do.

CLEAT Executive Director Charley Wilkison asks, "Why was the ammunition destroyed before it could be tested? The ammunition was evidence. Evidence was destroyed. Why are certain documents being withheld by the city? When did the Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tem, City Manager, Chief of Police, Assistant Chief and Commanders know? These are the questions we want to see answered."