Political war against officers in Fort Worth PD spreads to DA’s office

CLEAT has filed a complaint with the Texas Attorney General against Tarrant County District Attorney Sharen Wilson for releasing classified information pertaining to a Fort Worth police shooting. While the officer in question was initially cleared of wrongdoing by the Fort Worth Police Department IA investigation, the officer has not yet appeared before the Tarrant County Grand Jury. The information of an ongoing investigation was released by the DA to a criminal defense attorney who is suing the officer. “It’s our belief that the Texas Rangers who are assigned to handle criminal complaints inside the Texas Attorney General’s Office should investigate this incident,” said Charley Wilkison, Executive Director of CLEAT, “There is not a scenario where this type of intentional collusion is appropriate.”

This episode is just the latest in Fort Worth where standard police actions are under scrutiny and reaction by city officials that operates in tandem with criticism from Black Lives Matter and other anti-police organizations. Police brass have attempted to stop CLEAT attorneys from representing officers involved in critical incidents. The City Attorney’s office has attempted to stop an officer’s ability to avail themselves of having legal counsel available on scene at shootings, walkthroughs and other times when officers are allowed consultation and representation by legal counsel.

TCOLE's refusal to add names of fallen officers raises new questions about unchecked power

At least three fallen CLEAT members’ names will not be engraved on The Texas Peace Officers Memorial Monument this year according to the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, or TCOLE.

In an unprecedented move, TCOLE Chief Kim Vickers recommended to the appointed commissioners that Austin Senior Police Officer Amir Abdul-Khaliq, El Paso Police Patrolman Adrian Arellano and Southern Methodist University Officer Mark McCullers not be recognized as in-the-line-of-duty deaths and added to the monument located on the Texas Capitol grounds. The TCOLE Commissioners rubber stamped his recommendation.

> Political War continued on pg. 4

> TCOLE continued on pg. 4
There's levels to this...

A few days ago it was my opportunity to sit at dinner with the Attorney General of Texas. After the pleasantries and small talk evaporated I was struck by how focused Ken Paxton is on his work. Everyone who has read a headline knows he is under political and legal attack from his enemies. But as the worm turns, and days go by, you get to depose your accusers. There’s levels to all this and getting to the truth is the top level. That’s the way it works in America. I’m proud to have served my country through military service and by being a cop for over 35 years.

As I travel the state and witness firsthand what all we do for our members individually and through our local associations, I am deeply gratified by the levels of commitment that CLEAT leaders have for our organization. Local union presidents have one of the toughest jobs in all of CLEAT. Their phones ring constantly, these officers often give up time with their family, extra duty income opportunities, and even forgo chances at promotions in an attempt to serve their members. I thank you and everyone at CLEAT feels the same. In my mind our local leaders are working and serving at a whole new level.

When you look at what our membership is suffering through in places like Brownsville and Fort Worth, you can easily understand what CLEAT means to those officers being attacked by their local politicians who should be supporting them. When you see CLEAT file a complaint against the District Attorney in Tarrant County and watch as we send in four CLEAT lawyers into Brownsville then you can see our commitment to the members and unions are at the highest level. Our members can rest assured that when the smoke clears, CLEAT will still be on their side.

The month of February introduced Senate Bill 13, a bad luck bill for working people in Texas that would ban dues checkoff for public employees like teachers, prison guards, and state employees, was heard in the Senate State Affairs Committee. I was saddened at who all did not testify against the bill. Sure, law enforcement is excluded at this moment in time but only the naïve would believe that we will be continue to be excluded. If the political leaders in Austin are willing to hurt our teachers, they will be coming for us soon enough. And for any statewide law enforcement group who believes in appeasement to the Texas Public Policy Foundation, the Arnold Foundation, the Right to Work Foundation, the American Legislative Exchange Council or any other of the Koch Brother front groups, they must have forgotten who they are supposed to work for. I witnessed CLEAT in a fine hour. Our warnings about conflicts because of seeking and receiving millions in grant money from the politicians all came true in one day. Those who were owned, sat in their chairs and watched those of us who were free from government money stand up and fight the dues check off bill. The politicians and the National Federation of Independent Business are still fuming over our testimony against the bill. We received threats against our independent position—but we were free and clear to stand and fight. And that’s exactly what we did. Myself and our leaders from across the state had no fear of having our grant dollars cut, we had no fear of some politician refusing to be our friend, we were able to fight for your rights because nobody owns CLEAT but our members. That puts us on a whole different level.

I am also proud to see that the Capitol Inside, a political trade publication here in Austin, mentioned us in their 2017 Lobby Power Rankings. They named the Texas Municipal League as number 1, they named the Texas Urban League of Counties as number 2, and Charley Wilkison, as number 3. While I disagree with their number 1 & 2 choices...think of the thousands of registered lobbyists in Austin and the resources that TML and Texas Counties bring to bear on the political process and the legislative session. For a police group to be in the top three for several sessions is nothing less than amazing to me. There's levels to all this.

When Austin member Geoffrey Freeman had to use deadly force on the job, CLEAT stood with him when Police Chief Art Acevedo hung him out to dry politically and began meeting with Black Lives Matter. CLEAT lawyers were present with him all the way through the process of high profile media attacks, and his own mayor using his shooting as an example of institutional racism. In the end, CLEAT subpoenaed the Mayor and the City of Austin offered to settle with Officer Freeman. Even though we felt we would have won the arbitration and gotten him his job back, Officer Freeman took the settlement to help his family move forward with their lives. It was CLEAT performing at the top of our game that offered Officer Freeman the choice.

Did I mention there's levels to all this? You get what you pay for and CLEAT costs a little more, but as a member you’ll never have to worry about who we are working for. We work for you.
Behind the secure gates of wealth and privilege. Some of those who are now yelling about hope and opportunity, were the same ones enhancing criminal statutes and building more prisons—back when those issues were rating high in the political polls.

So, when you drill down past all the happy talk you will find this legislative session is already shaping up to be very dangerous.

Please remember this, every single person at CLEAT is completely committed to protecting your rights and your family. As you know, CLEAT has stubbornly stuck to our core values of non-conflicted officer representation and hard core independence. We’ve passed up millions of dollars in government handouts in order to be able to represent only our members.

The chickens have already begun to come home to roost. Some of those who think they can be everyone’s friend are finding out it’s impossible. We don’t mind it if the politicians get peeved at us. Since we only work for you, we aren’t conflicted. You can count on us to fight the good fight for you and your family in spite of the current political climate.

Go to our Public Affairs web page www.cleat.org and click on the Political Representation tab for Legislative Updates. Check back often!
Political war in Fort Worth (Continued)

Several officers have active Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaints that are being filed.

“Fort Worth is quickly establishing itself as a leader of the anti-police, anti-officer ranks and governing through fear, oppression and discrimination in the workplace,” said Wilkison.

However, not too long ago the Fort Worth Police Department was seen as one of the top cities in the country for police officers to live, work, and retire. Defined benefit pension, state civil service job protections, and a renewable employment contract between the city and the police union that has brought a higher than average pay and benefit package had Fort Worth headlined as a career destination. In fact, as nearby Dallas dissolved into low morale, evaporating tax base and police and fire pension scandals, Fort Worth welcomed law enforcement refugees to economic and career stability.

“Need proof that bureaucrats and politicians can screw up success? Look to the evolving conditions in Fort Worth,” said Wilkison.

The AG complaint against Tarrant County DA Wilson is the first in CLEAT’s history. Late last year CLEAT also subpoenaed Austin Mayor Steve Adler when he held a press conference and referenced an open case against Austin police officer Geoffrey Freeman. The case, involving a shooting, was headed to arbitration when the Mayor made his inflammatory remarks in reference to the case and announced a new initiative against “institutional racism” inside the Austin Police Department.

“This is the new norm in the nationwide anti-police narrative,” said Wilkison. “Fort Worth isn’t being very innovative actually, they are just parroting other cities. But CLEAT is ready and we will fight for our members and our union there. When the smoke clears, we know the real people will support their local police,” Wilkison said.

Remembering the Fallen

The Peace Officers Memorial Foundation will mark its 30th year of solemn tribute to the Fallen on May 1st and 2nd at the south steps of the Texas Capitol. Be there!
CLEAT and PoliceOne Team Up for Texas Exclusive

CLEAT offers a number of benefits to our members that other groups do not... One of those is a FREE subscription to PoliceOne Academy. www.policeoneacademy.com

PoliceOne Academy is a TCOLE training provider that offers hundreds of online training classes, including classes mandated by TCOLE, such as “Legal Update” (TCOLE 3184).

Other TCOLE classes available are:

- Child Safety Check Alert List (TCOLE #4068)
- Juvenile Justice (TCOLE #77476)
- Intoxicated Driving (TCOLE #77474)
- Suicide Prevention for Law Enforcement (TCOLE #77479)
- Courthouse Security (TCOLE #2064)
- Civil Rights (TCOLE #77475)
- Human Trafficking (TCOLE #3270)

***In addition to the above classes, other classes covering hundreds of topics are available that also qualify for TCOLE credit.

The PoliceOne Academy costs $125/year for individual subscriptions, but accounts for CLEAT Members are included with their membership at NO ADDITIONAL CHARGE!

To take advantage of this service, log into your CLEAT ONLINE account at anytime!

If you have any questions at all about this great training opportunity, contact CLEAT Training Coordinator, Chris Jones. (chris.jones@cleat.org)

More detailed information can be accessed at www.cleat.org/online-tcole-training

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The 85th Tex

Politics make for bad legislative session

The Texas 85th Legislative Session is underway and from the first day, CLEAT has never seen such a negative onslaught against working people, specifically working law enforcement officers. Legislators from the political extremes are coming together in an attempt to oppress public employees and dismantle officer authority and jurisdiction.

Before the session began, it became evident that the role of law enforcement would be carefully scrutinized under a political microscope of misconception. A majority of the bills contradict a very core and crucial understanding of public safety. While claiming they want to ensure our communities are safe and free from crime and violence, they simultaneously want to slowly chip away at our officers’ rights and authority, undermining the men and women who are a vital component of public safety. The common trend among these bills is that they all seem to send the message of systematic abuse among all law enforcement. While claiming they want to protect and advocate for the rights of working officers, and now there are numerous legislators who want to destroy this right. Numerous bad retirement bills have already been filed. As this struggle continues every session, this year it is particularly hard on law enforcement as legislators are finding new ways to blame the working officers for unfunded retirement systems when oftentimes politicians are failing to make the required contributions. Some of the new retirement legislation would leave officers struggling for income at the end of their careers.

There is a bill that would require departments to retain complaints of alleged official oppression of an officer indefinitely. This does not take into account whether the complaint was ever dismissed down the road, whether the officer was cleared from these allegations, or whether this complaint was based on unfounded facts. A bill has also been filed that would require the recording of grand jury proceedings involving a public employee and requiring this recording be disclosed if there is a no bill of indictment. The privacy and employment rights of officers are at stake.

The hypocrisy of legislation is also troubling. There is an outpour of bills that seem to assist in better rights for criminals, yet hurt the rights of the officers that are risking their lives against those very criminals for the sake of public safety. Other bills that attempt to criminalize police officer conduct or hinge on meticulous details and standards also pose a large threat to officer duties, such as legislation mandating heightened standards for body and vehicle searches through the law rather than through policy and legislation exposing the possibility of an indictment for a felony if an officer exhibits a weapon in a threatening manner.

Furthermore, police authority is under attack. There are bills that would prohibit police officers from arresting Class C Misdemeanors. Historically, this has been a tool that has helped officers catch criminals and gang members who are a danger to the public.

It is important that our members stand up now, stronger than ever to fight these bills aimed at destroying officer retirement, authority, employment rights, first amendment freedoms, and privacy, to name a few. It is urgent that our members stay current on legislative alerts and bills that CLEAT is opposing so that officers of Texas can fight together against these bad bills at the Capitol.

On CLEAT’s website under the “News and Events” tab click on “Legislative Updates” to view the complete list of bills tracked by CLEAT. This is updated every day and will provide lists of the bills that law enforce-
ment will be involved in and that could severely affect the job of the working officer.


**SANDRA BLAND ACT:**

Another late breaking measure filed in the Texas House of Representatives is the so-called Sandra Bland Act. HB 2702 is a 55 page bill authored by Representative Garnet Coleman of Houston. CLEAT does not oppose more training in county jails or more mental health training in general.

However, we will oppose any legislation that seeks to limit the authority of an officer to ask questions at a traffic stop. We believe officers asking questions protect the public, solve crimes and save lives. Handcuffing officers from doing their jobs just in order to placate a certain political base does not protect the public or make good public policy.
CLEAT’s Biennial Legislative Reception took place at the Sheraton Austin Hotel Downtown on Tuesday, January 17th, 2017. The reception was intended as an event to gather CLEAT members and their respective legislators to discuss the 85th Legislative Session.

The reception was held in the Capitol Terrace Room of the Sheraton, with a backdrop view of the Capitol. Deep navy blue tablecloths and accents adorned the room, representing the color of police officers everywhere. A spread of great food and drink filled the room. Guests poured in and out all the night getting to interact with the members of CLEAT and the various legislators who attended.

“CLEAT held its first Legislative Reception in 1999, 23 years after forming as an association. It’s our chance to make sure our legislative agenda is front and center for legislators and their staff,” said CLEAT President Todd Harrison.

Earlier that day CLEAT Executive Board members headed to a conference room at the Sheraton for an executive meeting to discuss budget for the various divisions of CLEAT, including legal, public affairs, and training. The day centered around the future and the divisions working towards creating only the best for Texas law enforcement.

“Our Executive Board is made up of elected rank and file members. They offer direction and focus for where they see the organization needing to go. We meet quarterly to listen and share in the vision of our executive staff,” Harrison said.

On the morning of January 18th, CLEAT wrapped up its legislative event by hosting a breakfast at the Sheraton where Representative Dan Flynn, Chairman of the House Committee on Pensions, spoke to the CLEAT Board members about the 85th Legislative Session and focused on some of the issues surrounding retirement—a big topic buzzing around the world of law enforcement. Members were able to ask Representative Flynn questions and engage in conversation about some of their concerns regarding retirement.

“CLEAT has successfully fought for your retirement, your pay, and working conditions for 41 years. Our connections in the Capitol are deep. You can count on us to stand up for you!” Harrison stated.

New Executive Board Members from Waco and Arlington

The CLEAT Executive Board is comprised of the President, three statewide elected Vice Presidents and Regional Directors from across Texas. The executive board meets quarterly to discuss the service to our members. The board passes an annual asset and operating budget and prior to the biennial legislative session the board thoroughly vetts issues and votes to set the legislative agenda.

Ken Reeves sworn in as Region 8 Director by CLEAT President, Todd Harrison.

JP Mason stood before the Executive Board on January 17, 2017 and swore in before the CLEAT Executive Board as Region 1 Director.
The CLEAT Executive Board adopted the legislative agenda during the Lobby Blitz and held their quarterly board meeting on January 17, 2017 in Austin, Texas. Pictured: (L to R) Executive Board Meeting, Marvin Ryals, and Lobby Blitz Session at Capitol.

CLEAT Public Affairs Staff and Executive Board gathered with Texas Representatives and their staff at the 2017 Legislative Reception.
Cindy Stormer
Staff Attorney, Fort Worth/North Texas
Cindy Stormer has been a prosecutor with Dallas (Super Chief), Cooke (elected District Attorney), and Tarrant Counties. She was formerly the Chief over Police Liaison in Dallas (Assistant City Attorney and Executive Officer in the Dallas Police Department). She is the author of two law related books: Texas Small Firm Practice Tools, and BrainStormer. She is licensed in the United States Supreme Court and federal courts, authoring over three hundred appellate briefs and/or writs. She has been a college instructor (legal assisting, government and criminal justice) and was a Police Officer and in police work for ten years (holding an advanced certificate).

Paul Barnes
Staff Attorney, Austin
Paul earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas. While at the University of St. Thomas, Paul volunteered with student-run nonprofit organizations. His drive to help others led him to South Texas College of Law in Houston. After receiving his Juris Doctorate in May of 2015, he passed the Texas State Bar and earned his law license in November of 2015. Before joining the CLEAT legal team in January of 2017, he spent his first year as an attorney getting a wide range of legal experience while trying to build his own practice. Paul was born and raised in Houston, Texas.

J.R. Ramirez
Staff Attorney Rio Grande Valley
J.R. Ramirez has over fifteen years of experience in law enforcement, working with the City of McAllen and Mission Police Department. JR was an executive board member of the local police union for thirteen years of his law enforcement career. As a property crime detective for the City of McAllen, he focused on credit card fraud and financial crime cases while working alongside the Secret Service. His career led him to pursue a major in Criminal Justice and received his Bachelor of Science from the University of Texas-Pan American in 2009. He went on to receive his Juris Doctorate in December 2015 and received his license by the State Bar of Texas in 2016.

CLEAT member Henry Rivera of the El Paso Municipal Police Officers Association is in Austin attending hearings and speaking with leaders about issues facing Texas cities. Henry has officially filed as a candidate for the District 7 City Council race in El Paso.

On February 16, 2017, CLEAT Staff Attorney Bob Thomas represented Harris County Detention Officer Lonnie Franklin at the Harris County Sheriff’s Civil Service Commission hearing. Lonnie was terminated on September 6, 2016. After a contested evidentiary hearing, the Commission voted unanimously to reverse the termination and immediately reinstate Officer Franklin. He was assigned to 1200 Baker on the Administrative Segregation 2nd floor.

CLEAT Field Representative John Kerr, Retired FWPD (John was former Fort Worth POA President and CLEAT Vice President), Billy Henderson, Retired WFPD (Billy was former Wichita Falls POA President and former CLEAT Executive Board member) and CLEAT Director of Field Services Dwight Tiller; they were all together tonight at the Wichita Falls POA event.

CLEAT member Corporal Elise Bowden getting a hero’s welcome as she leaves the hospital. She was the victim of a vehicular assault earlier this week. We are thankful that Elise is on the road to recovery!
San Antonio Mayor Ivy Taylor and CLEAT Executive Director Charley Wilkison discuss statewide law enforcement issues in Austin. 

CLEAT President Todd Harrison and Executive Director Charley Wilkison testified against SB 13 in front of the Senate Committee on State Affairs. CLEAT strongly opposes any effort to prohibit the deduction of association membership dues from individuals’ pay checks, which provide legal defense for the members and is a voluntary right.

State Representative Dan Flynn is speaking to CLEAT Executive Board members at breakfast on January 18th, 2017 in Austin. Rep. Flynn is Chairman of the House Committee on Pensions. 

CLEAT working on bills to help injured officers and officers suffering from duty related PTSD. 

Texas law enforcement officers and their families can breathe a little easier as long as these two are reading bad bills and watching your back in the Texas legislature. Chris Jones and Charley Wilkison have been working together at CLEAT since 1994.

Charley Wilkison on the set of Capital Tonight discussing the issues we will be tackling this 85th Legislative Session.

CLEAT in the Capitol

Pictured: (L to R) Lloyd Cook, Scott Leeton, and Charley Wilkison

Pictured: CLEAT President, Todd Harrison on right testifies against SB13
## Your Upcoming Events

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>POMF Scholarship Deadline</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>April 28, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>16th Annual Ride for the Fallen</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>April 29, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peace Officers' Memorial Foundation: Candlelight Vigil</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>April 30, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peace Officers' Memorial</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>May 1, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>41st Annual CLEAT Convention</td>
<td>Fort Worth, Texas</td>
<td>September 7-9, 2017</td>
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You can find these events on [www.cleat.org](http://www.cleat.org)

Register Now!

Remember to make ALL La Quinta reservations online at [www.lq.com/CLEAT](http://www.lq.com/CLEAT)

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Peace Officers’ Memorial Foundation Discount
For reservations go to [www.lq.com/POMF](http://www.lq.com/POMF)
or [www.lq.com/CLEAT](http://www.lq.com/CLEAT)
Use Promotional Code: POMF or CLEAT

*Discount valid on business or leisure travel. Subject to availability. Discount subject to change. Tax not included. Blackout dates apply.

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