



NEWS RELEASE

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CLEAT Defends Jefferson County Collective Bargaining Rights, Demands Orange County Bargain in Good Faith

AUSTIN, TX— Recently, it has come to our attention that a current lawsuit involving a CLEAT affiliate, the Jefferson County Deputy Sheriff's Association, and Jefferson County, is being used to justify Orange County's refusal to lawfully bargain in good faith, a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the members of the Orange County Sheriff's Office. The current litigation pending at the Appellate Court has no bearing on Orange County bargaining with their employees. This position is wrong, and CLEAT calls upon the leadership of Orange County to immediately engage in good faith collective bargaining negotiations with the members of the Orange County Sheriff's Office. There have been several social media posts that have disseminated inaccurate or false information claiming to support Orange County's position.

"To set the record straight," says CLEAT Executive Director Robert Leonard, "CLEAT responded with legal action on behalf of our local association in Jefferson County after the Sheriff took it upon herself to exclude detention/corrections officers from the collective bargaining process; a right they've enjoyed for decades in Jefferson County. In an attempt to circumvent Texas Local Government Code (TLGC) Chapter 174, and while engaging in Union busting, the Sheriff has opted NOT to swear in her detention officers, exploiting what she believes is a loophole in state law. The matter is currently on appeal to the Appellate Court. We are confident in our defense of the officers, as case law is very clear: county detention officers serve in a professional law enforcement capacity."

County Deputies and Detention Officers across the State of Texas have participated in bargaining contracts under TLGC 174 for decades, a right given to them by the members of the Texas legislature. Additionally, these recent social media posts indicate that dispatchers are covered by TLGC 174. That is incorrect. TLGC 174 covers employees operating in a "law enforcement capacity," which does not include and has never included dispatchers. While it is true that dispatchers have been allowed to join their local law enforcement association, they have never been parties to any collective bargaining agreement or contract.

CLEAT represents nearly all county law enforcement associations who participate in collective bargaining across the State. The process has resulted in strong professional standards and better working conditions in the counties that engage in the process. This has helped counties retain their highly trained and experienced employees while continuing to recruit new ones.

"Orange County needs to follow the law, get back to the table, and bargain a new contract," says Leonard.

About CLEAT: *Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT) is the largest statewide law enforcement association in Texas, dedicated to providing legal protection, legislative advocacy, and professional support for law enforcement professionals statewide and consisting of over 28,000 members. With a commitment to protecting the rights of officers and ensuring they have the resources needed to serve their communities effectively, CLEAT stands at the forefront of law enforcement representation. For more information, visit www.cleat.org.*

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