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CLEAT Expresses Concern Over Law Enforcement Technology Reversal in Hays County

AUSTIN, TX— After approving funding for Axon upgrades in the budget, the Hays County Commissioners Court reversed its decision and failed to follow through with the first payment under the new contract.

The Axon technology upgrades, approved at \$4.5 million over 10 years, would have added features to officers' existing equipment that would enhance efficiency, safety, and accuracy. The software includes real-time translation allowing officers to communicate effectively with those who speak another language, transcription services, and keyword searches in the database that currently stores all information related to their equipment (body-worn cameras, in-car cameras, tasers, etc.). The package also provides investigative assistance by capturing identification card information instantly, allowing officers to focus on subjects and conversations on scene, enhancing safety for all, and would provide additional cameras to be placed inside the jail that far exceed current capabilities. The cameras are designed to detect potential issues with inmates such as a medical emergency, unusual movements, or other circumstances that could prevent in-custody deaths. These are just a few of the items included in the 17-point technology package.

"The concern is that the current sentiment swirling in the media and across the country surrounding law enforcement technology is negatively impacting basic needs and advancements in current equipment and software. Similar to the upgrades we all experience with computers and cellular devices, law enforcement equipment requires upgrades as the technology advances," said CLEAT Executive Director Robert Leonard. "These tools are paramount to public safety, enhance law enforcement service to the community, are a force multiplier, and ensure efficiency."

"Why would we deny our deputies the ability to communicate more effectively, quickly access information to assist in their reports and investigations, and keep the public and inmates safe? The idea that technology is being used against the public is simply false, and we cannot allow that narrative to hinder advancements in public safety moving forward," Leonard stated. "We ask that political subdivisions take a better look at how these tools save time, money, and lives and are used to enhance transparency. We must not let political winds abruptly end progress in the law enforcement profession."

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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