

# EXHIBIT B-1



4. I joined the Houston Police Department (“HPD”) in the early 1990s as a civilian employee. After graduating from the Houston Police Department Academy, I became a licensed peace officer, then a homicide detective, a hostage negotiator, and eventually I was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. I served HPD for a total of 18 years in different capacities.

5. After that, I pursued elected office and was elected to Houston City Council in 2009. I served as the representative for District H, and I was the chair of the City Council’s Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee. I was elected by my peers to serve as Vice Mayor Pro Tempore from 2010–2012. Then, I was appointed Mayor Pro Tempore in 2012 by then-Mayor Annise Parker. From 2009 to 2016, I completed three full terms in that role, which was the maximum allowed because of term limits in place at the time.

6. I was elected Harris County Sheriff in November 2016, about six months after this lawsuit was filed. Upon election, I submitted a sworn affidavit to this Court expressing my firmly held belief—which I still hold—that the County’s “operation of the money bail system [at the time the lawsuit was filed], including the Sheriff’s active participation in that system, violate[d] the United States Constitution,” and that “[a] a person’s access to money should not be a determining factor in whether he or she is jailed or released after arrest and pending trial. There is no public safety justification for basing the law enforcement decision of detention or release on money.” Dkt. 96-1 ¶¶ 4–5. Almost ten years later, I stand by these statements.

7. I also reiterate the following statements I made in that same declaration: “The County’s widespread detention of arrestees because they are too poor to pay arbitrary amounts of money is a waste of public resources and actually undermines public safety. These policies and practices also create unnecessary health and safety risks for both our inmates and our guards and other jail personnel.” Dkt. 96-1 ¶ 3. These words are as true today as they were in 2016.

8. I was reelected in 2020 and 2024. I am the head of the Harris County Sheriff's Office, a law enforcement agency of more than 4,900 employees, including detention staff. The Harris County Sheriff's Office runs Harris County Jail facilities which includes the JPC. Harris County Jail facilities house nearly 8,500 incarcerated individuals. I was elected before the Consent Decree took effect, so I have observed how the misdemeanor bail system functions with and without the Consent Decree.

**II. Harris County's Misdemeanor Pre-Trial System Before the Consent Decree Led to the Arbitrary Detention of Thousands of People Each Year.**

9. Throughout my 18 years with the Houston Police Department and into the beginning of my tenure as Sheriff of Harris County, I experienced what it was like to work in law enforcement under a system that used access to cash as the deciding factor for whether a person would be released or detained after arrest. Regularly, I witnessed individuals who were in jail solely because they could not afford to buy their way out. I also saw how poor process-flow at intake slowed down the entire criminal justice system, and how judges heavily relied on cash bail over other conditions.

10. Informed by my decades of service in law enforcement and elected office, I believe that the misdemeanor bail system that was challenged by the Plaintiffs did not promote public safety and led to some unnecessary detention decisions. The prior system relied on access-to-cash as the barometer of whether someone would be released after arrest. This led to the widespread detention of indigent arrestees based on their inability to pay arbitrary amounts of money. There were low-risk individuals, unlikely to intentionally flee prosecution or commit future violence, who remained in jail because they could not pay even seemingly low money bonds—in 2016, the maximum amount on the County's misdemeanor bail schedule was \$5,000. On the other hand,

there were higher-risk individuals, more likely to miss court appearances or reoffend, who were released because they could afford whatever amount their bond was set at.

11. As the Sheriff of Harris County, I strongly believe that the decision of whether an arrestee remains in jail should be based on public safety and risk—not the amount of money that they can pay.

12. At the end of the day, as a law enforcement executive, my North Star is making sure that we can truly keep the community safe from those who are accused of crimes while the person is in the pre-trial phase of their case, whether they have money or not. Before the Consent Decree, the misdemeanor bail system undermined that goal. Arrestees were unconstitutionally subjected to detention based on their access to money, which was not an accurate predictor of threat to the community.

### **III. As Harris County Sheriff, I Continue to Support the Consent Decree.**

13. In 2016, I spoke out in favor of bail reform because I believed that the Harris County Sheriff should play a role in reforming any unconstitutional bail practices, and that the way the money bail system was being operated was violating the United States Constitution. I still stand by those beliefs today.

14. Now that I am in my third term as Harris County Sheriff, I still believe that those who pose a continuing threat to public safety belong in our county jail, regardless of their ability to post bond.

### **IV. The Consent Decree Has Worked Well.**

15. Since I and the other parties entered into the Consent Decree in 2019, my office has played a critical role in implementing its reforms. Consequently, I have seen how those reforms have improved the misdemeanor bail system and the jail. Since misdemeanor reform has come

into effect, our jail is significantly less congested with low-risk defendants, and our deputies and detention officers are better able to focus on monitoring higher-risk arrestees in the jail.

**a. The Consent Decree conserves resources for higher-risk felony arrestees.**

16. The Harris County Sheriff's Office has resources budgeted to maintain safety within the jail and community. Prior to the Consent Decree, significant taxpayer resources were dedicated to misdemeanor defendants. Even though they were accused of committing low-level offenses that did not pose significant threats to the community, resources still had to be allocated as each defendant was processed and housed at the jail. This is because every defendant who cannot afford to pay bond is another inmate who adds to the daily jail population which requires dedicated costs for meals, clothing, medical and mental health care, security, etc. The cost of the unnecessary incarceration of all those misdemeanor defendants limited the dedication of resources to aggressively monitor higher risk, violent arrestees.

**b. The Consent Decree improves public safety and the effective distribution of resources.**

17. Generally speaking, the Harris County Sheriff's Office is better able to serve the public when it can focus its resources on higher-risk arrestees.

18. Now that the Consent Decree is in full effect, misdemeanor arrestees have less interaction with law enforcement and make up less of the jail population.

19. The Harris County Sheriff's Office is the entity responsible for executing warrants when a judge forfeits or revokes a person's bond. Despite early concerns from some, it is my belief that there is no public safety crisis caused by the Consent Decree or by releasing misdemeanor arrestees after arrest. It is my understanding that the results of the research by the independent court-appointed monitors are consistent with my office's experience overseeing the jail, executing warrants, and monitoring the courts.

20. As Sheriff of Harris County, I believe that the Consent Decree has improved public safety by allowing us to shift our resources to focus more on arrestees charged with more serious crimes who are more likely to pose a threat to the community. I will continue to work with all parties involved to ensure that Harris County's criminal justice system honors the rights of all defendants who have yet to be convicted of a crime, while also keeping all residents of Harris County safe.

**V. The Consent Decree Protects Sheriff Office's Personnel and Inmates in Our Custody.**

21. On any given day there are hundreds of inmates coming into the Harris County Jail through the JPC. Prior to the Consent Decree, many arrestees with access to money could immediately bond out by posting the relevant amount on the bail schedule.

22. Now, instead of this cash-based system of release, the Consent Decree establishes a charge-based system for misdemeanor pretrial decisions. It ensures that those charged with higher-level misdemeanor offenses, or who have certain criminal histories, are required to go before a magistrate.

23. Through the collaboration of my office, the Harris County District Attorney's Office, the Harris County Public Defender's Office, and the courts, we have managed to reduce the jail population from its FY 2025 high of 9,931 to 8,271, as of June 2026, as we have fewer low-level misdemeanor arrestees in custody.

24. Many of the arrestees housed at the jail arrive with serious health concerns and medical needs. Although they receive adequate treatment at the jail, GOBs divert arrestees who may have social, mental health, and medical needs that can be addressed in the community away from the jail and back into the community for their care.

25. As the Sheriff of the Harris County Jail, I believe that ending the Consent Decree would create unnecessary safety risks for both our inmates and personnel.

26. For the last decade, I have supported the urgent need for bail policies that reflect the dignity of arrestees while prioritizing public safety. The Consent Decree accomplishes that vision for thousands misdemeanor arrestees each year. I fully support it.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.



Ed Gonzalez  
Sheriff  
Harris County Sheriff's Office

Date: August 27, 2026