

EXHIBIT B-6

I. My Background as a Law Enforcement Officer.

3. I began my career in law enforcement in 1997 as a civilian dispatcher with HCSO. I then transitioned to a detention officer, working to keep our jail safe, and graduated from HCSO's Basic Peace Officer Course (BPOC) in 2003. I worked as a peace officer at the Inmate Processing Center ("IPC"), which was where Harris County processed individuals arrested on Class A or B misdemeanors and felonies prior to the opening of the JPC.

4. I transitioned to patrol in 2004, where I was assigned to enforce criminal laws as a deputy in Harris County. After that, I transferred into the investigative units of Robbery and Homicide, respectively. In 2011, I promoted to Sergeant and supervised the Crimes Against Children Unit, currently called the Child Abuse Unit. In 2018, I promoted to Lieutenant. In that role, I worked to reduce backlogs in child abuse, violent crimes, and warrant cases.

5. In 2023, I promoted to Captain. In that role, I returned to the Detention Operations Command where I helped establish an investigative unit focused on investigating human trafficking, gang intelligence, and drug interdiction in the Harris County jail.

6. In 2025, I promoted to Major of the Detention Management Bureau where I oversaw the day-to-day operations of the JPC, in addition to leading our investigations and ensuring security at the Harris County's Criminal Courthouse.

7. In July 2026, I was assigned the responsibility of creating the Detention Security and Enforcement Bureau, which operates under the Detention Operations Command. In this role, I continue to work to make our Harris County jail safe while treating arrestees and inmates fairly and efficiently.

II. Harris County's Post-Arrest Process Prior to the Opening of the JPC in 2019.

8. The post-arrest process in Harris County has changed dramatically since the filing of this lawsuit in 2016. Prior to the Consent Decree, local law enforcement agencies would bring

Class A or B misdemeanors or felony arrestees to one of HCSO's four satellite offices or, in some cities, to the local jail of the arresting agency. Then, the arresting officer would fill out their charging documents and intake form. Once the arresting officer completed those documents, they would send the documents to the Harris County District Attorney's Office ("HCDAO"). If the HCDAO accepted the charges, the HCDAO's intake unit initiated the court process, and the criminal case was considered "paper ready."

9. Once a case was paper ready and was filed against the arrestee, it was then assigned to a County Criminal Court at Law ("CCCL") judge. A criminal complaint would then be issued to which a bail amount was affixed according to the misdemeanor bail schedule or the assigned CCCL judge's specific requirements.

10. A misdemeanor arrestee with financial means could post bail as soon as their case was assigned the bail amount required for release, usually 12 to 16 hours after arrest. Because this old system determined who was released or detained based on ability to pay, an arrestee with access to money could post their bail as soon as the case was paper ready. If the arrestee posted the assigned bail amount, they would be promptly released.

11. Arrestees who could not afford their bond right away had to wait to be transferred from their local jail or lockup facility to the IPC for further processing and magistration - and, if they weren't released after magistration, they were booked into housing. Arrestees who could post the cash bail assigned to their case at any time in this process could be released. In 2016, about one-third of misdemeanor arrestees were released prior to magistration after paying the amount generated using the bail schedule.

III. The Post-Arrest Process at the JPC.

12. At the beginning of 2019, the Harris County opened the JPC. While previously law enforcement used to take arrestees to a local jail or HCSO satellite location to await transport and

available space at the IPC, the JPC centralized and streamlined the process. Now, the vast majority of arrestees from across Harris County are brought to the JPC immediately after arrest, regardless of the arresting agency. As a result, on average, there are about 275 to 380 arrestees processed through the JPC each day. It took years to design and obtain funding to build and open the JPC.

13. When arrestees are brought to the JPC, they pass through a highly coordinated multi-step process:

A. The first-floor intake process.

14. First, arrestees are brought in through the street-level garage. Once in the building, they are searched, provided jail-issued clothing, and fingerprinted. The first-floor intake area has a limited capacity for arrestees that are in processing. As part of this initial process, we check their criminal histories and have them answer an intake screening questionnaire.

15. That screening serves multiple functions. It allows us to connect certain arrestees with social service referrals that are on site. It also allows us to quickly triage arrestees that are medically vulnerable. If an arrestee's intake screening responses indicate that they need immediate medical attention, those needs will be addressed by the jail's medical provider.

16. On average, the first-floor intake process takes approximately 1 hour.

B. The second-floor receiving process.

17. Next, once an arrestee completes intake, and assuming they do not require medical attention, we bring the arrestee upstairs to "Receiving." Receiving is a designated area where arrestees work through the remaining steps of the pre-trial process. Our Receiving area has a maximum capacity, which can be reached on busy days.

18. Receiving is a dynamic and complex process requiring cooperation between HCSO staff, other Harris County agencies, civilian employees, and the arrestees. Any unexpected delays in that process can create obstacles for the timely and safe operations of the JPC.

19. Once an arrestee reaches Receiving, the first step is to wait; specifically, the arrestee must wait until the HCDAO files the criminal case against them or reviews the status of an open warrant. The HCDAO may take some time to review a case, and it may even send the statement of probable cause back to the arresting officer to cure a deficiency, before deciding whether or not to file a case. As a result, arrestees who arrive in Receiving are regularly asked to wait between 2 to 20 hours before the charge against them is filed.

20. When the charge against an arrestee is filed (including in a warrant case, where the charge is filed beforehand), arrestees are placed in the queue to speak to Pre-Trial Services ("PTS"). When it's their turn, PTS will call them up to a window to meet with a staff person. Although PTS strives to do this quickly, sometimes, there may be unexpected delays.

21. At PTS interviews, a PTS case worker works with individuals to gather indigence information, assess the need for services, and prepare a Public Safety Assessment score and any other relevant paperwork. The information collected by PTS goes into a packet, which is transmitted to the Harris County Public Defender's Office ("HCPDO") once it is completed.

22. The HCDAO currently screens all misdemeanor arrestees for GOB eligibility under the Consent Decree. GOBs are unsecured \$100 bonds that carry out Local Rule 9's requirement that most misdemeanor arrestees be promptly released after arrest prior to magistration. In the JWEB case management system, the HCDAO marks whether a person should receive a GOB or be detained for magistration. PTS notes the HCDAO's GOB designations and ensures that people who are eligible to receive GOBs are placed in line for prompt release.

23. For arrestees marked to be released on a GOB, PTS will ensure the HCSO detention officer assigned to Receiving knows that the arrestee must be released on a GOB. The arrestee will then be processed into pre-release, where they will wait until detention staff is available to process

their release. However, even if a person is GOB eligible on their Harris County offense, HCSO will maintain custody of some arrestees based on statutorily mandated timeframes, such as arrestees with immigration holds or out-of-county warrants. Additionally, some arrestees who receive GOBs on a misdemeanor offense must remain detained for a bail hearing on a concurrent charge.

24. Except in those cases described above, GOB-eligible arrestees' post-arrest process ends after the arrestees' interview with PTS. HCSO then facilitates their safe release. On average, the time from arrest to release on a GOB is between 10–18 hours depending on how busy the JPC is on a given day. But if there is a high volume of intakes, the process will take longer.

25. On an average day, about 70 arrestees out of 280, or roughly 25%, will be released promptly on GOBs. There are both weekly and seasonal fluctuations in the number of daily arrestees. Certain days of the workweek tend to have higher numbers of arrestees. And the summers always bring higher numbers of arrestees as well. This summer, we had days where HCSO processed between 381 to 399 arrestees. The GOBs allow us to handle the sudden spikes in intakes because they facilitate the efficient process, resulting in the release of approximately 25% of the arrestees with less costs and supervision. Without the efficient, pre-hearing release afforded by GOBs, it would be difficult to handle the high-intake volume days we sometimes experience at the JPC.

26. The impacts of high-volume arrest days sometimes reverberate for days after the intakes have slowed down. Without GOBs, the "high-volume" days would be the new normal. The effects of processing an additional 70 arrestees every day through magistration and housing would compound overtime, resulting in overcrowding and other challenges.

C. Non-GOB-eligible arrestees must go through the remaining steps of the process.

27. Arrestees not released on GOBs continue through the post-arrest process in Receiving. After completing their PTS interview, HCSO staff in Receiving places arrestees on a magistration docket several hours in the future. Two hours before the start of their magistration docket, arrestees meet with a public defender. These meetings usually last no more than ten to fifteen minutes.

28. The magistration dockets may sometimes run several hours behind. It can be difficult to get all 15 (the size of the docket) people on the docket to the courtroom, as they are usually spread out across Receiving for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the preceding docket may run over, or the hearing officer does not start the docket on time because they are busy with other work matters. The dockets themselves often take two hours or more to complete. Some individual cases take far longer than expected, such as when the hearing officer is considering whether to issue an emergency protective order. Because of these circumstances, people routinely wait several hours for their interview with the public defender and then a few more hours for magistration.

29. At magistration, a hearing officer will make a probable cause determination, if one has not already been made, and set bail in bail-eligible offenses. The intake process has also been impacted by recent legislation, now for certain felonies, a magistrate is prohibited from releasing an arrestee, and the bail decision is deferred to the assigned felony district court judge. HCSO routinely has to take dozens of people from the JPC to the criminal courthouse so that a district judge can set bail within 48 hours of arrest, as required by state law. Sometimes these groups of arrestees are as large as 40 or 50 people. It requires an immense amount of work to identify, secure, and transport these individuals from the JPC to the courthouse and back. For these felony arrestees, then, it is critically important that we timely and efficiently bring them before a district judge to have bail set.

30. Once bail is set, whether by the hearing officer at magistration or by a district court judge, arrestees will either be (i) released on a personal bond; (ii) released after posting the secured bail amount ordered by a judicial officer; or (iii) booked into housing at one of our longer-term jail facilities. For (i) and (ii), arrestees slated to be released, they will be transferred to pre-release where they will get in line to be processed for release. Those who cannot afford the secure bail amount set in their case will remain in our custody in pre-trial detention until either they post the bail amount or their case is resolved.

IV. Eliminating General Order Bonds Would Cause Serious Backlogs.

31. As described above, the post-arrest process that unfolds in the JPC is complex, dynamic, and relies on the skillful cooperation of multiple county agencies. A delay in one step of the process can have ripple effects across the entire system and cause serious backlogs.

32. For example, if we have an influx of arrestees on a Thursday night, that will likely slow down the intake process on the first floor, requiring additional detention officers downstairs. In turn, there may be temporary reassignment of detention officers in Receiving to help facilitate the steps of the process, such as gathering everyone for a particular magistration docket or moving people who are bailing out from Receiving to pre-release. Similarly, if there are delays in PTS arrestees will have to wait longer for their interview, which will potentially cause a delay in each arrestee being interviewed by a public defender, which will then possibly delay the next magistration docket being ready, which then delays the release and processing of everyone else on that docket. Without the GOBs, these problems, which right now are isolated occurrences that we can eventually work our way out of, risk becoming permanent features.

33. Delays are bad for everyone, but as a law enforcement officer, I especially worry about delays in our serious felony cases involving warrantless arrests. HCSO is obligated to release a person for whom a magistrate has not found probable cause within 48 hours of arrest. Our average

processing time for non-GOB cases is about 36 hours. Right now, if someone is approaching the 48-hour-mark, we give them special attention and ensure the hearing officer evaluates probable cause on the papers. But that vigilance requires someone on staff with the capacity to closely monitor processing times and facilitate the hearing officer's review (e.g. charging documents must be approved and filed, probable cause statement must be available, and PTS must have prepared the person's packet).

34. Right now, the post-arrest process is complex but workable because at least 25% of the arrestees coming through our doors are promptly released within 10–18 hours. In my decades of experience at HCSO, the jail has never detained *anyone* prior to magistration. There has *always* been a mechanism for releasing a substantial portion of arrestees prior to a hearing. Previously, people with access to money could pay their bail and be released without ever seeing a judge. Now, the decision to promptly release an arrestee is based on the charge alleged, not their access to cash.

35. That change makes sense. HCSO has dedicated resources to run the JPC. So, it is important to focus on timely processing arrestees charged with more serious crimes. The GOB system allows HCSO to do just that.

36. As I understand the data, we release about 27,000 or 28,000 people per year on GOBs. Completely halting all pre-hearing release would mean that all of the agencies working in the JPC—HCSO, PDO, and PTS—would be required to manage tens of thousands more arrestees annually. It would mean arranging additional public defender interviews, magistration hearings, bail payments, medical intakes, and, for at least some, long-term jail beds for each person who could otherwise be released on a GOB. Each of these processes could become overburdened and delayed.

37. The JPC building was designed for speed and efficiency of on the processing of arrestees. Even if we had the additional staff to accommodate tens of thousands more arrestees not being promptly released, the JPC building itself does not currently have extra physical space for HCPDO to conduct tens of thousands of additional pre-hearing interviews. Similarly, in Receiving, which sometimes nears capacity threshold, additional arrestees could be stuck for hours until their magistration docket is called.

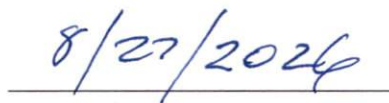
38. Eliminating the GOBs could also create safety concerns at JPC. If the number of arrestees in Receiving grows, the process could become slower with frequent and severe backlogs. Arrestees could become more anxious or stressed, argumentative, and combative.

39. If GOBs were eliminated, contingencies for potential acute medical care will need to be revised due to increased time of arrestees at the JPC.

40. Eliminating the GOBs is unnecessary for public safety and would divert resources away from managing our highest-risk arrestees.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my ability.


Major Matthew Ferguson
Harris County, Texas


Date