

PROBATION OFFICERS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY www.DallasCounty-POPS.com

Mission Statement

PO's for Public Safety is a non-profit, non-partisan, volunteer group of county probation employees and other concerned citizens whose goal is to promote and enhance public safety by improving judicial decision-making and heightening the effectiveness of probation supervision.

The Crime Problem in Dallas

- A citizen of Dallas is more than twice as likely to be murdered than a citizen of New York City. *Source: DallasCrime.Com*
- A citizen of Dallas is more than six times as likely to be burglarized than a citizen of New York City. *Source: DallasCrime.Com*
- In 2004, there were 16,165 violent crimes committed in Dallas, including 248 murders and 7466 robberies. *Source: DallasCrime.Com*
- For the last 8 years, Dallas has led the nation in crime per capita among cities with more than a million residents. *Source: Dallas Morning News, April 22, 2006*
- **About 1/3 of all people arrested in the State of Texas are already on probation at the time of arrest.** *Source: Dallas Morning News, August 7, 2005*

The Failure of the Judges

- The Texas Penal Code prohibits judges from granting probation to anyone convicted of a first-degree felony, such as murder, aggravated sexual assault or aggravated robbery. However, **the felony court judges in Dallas County have routinely placed hundreds of first degree felons on probation by granting them deferred adjudication probation.** Murderers, rapists, armed robbers, and kidnappers generally are not appropriate for probation supervision and represent a palpable threat to the community. *Source: PO's for Public Safety*

- Felony court judges in Dallas County have allowed murder defendants and other first-degree felons to get out of jail by granting personal recognizance bonds or setting low bond amounts. Many first-degree felony defendants are released on bail without electronic monitoring and remain on the streets for 5 years or more awaiting trial. *Source: PO's for Public Safety*
- Recently, a man facing a murder charge was released from jail on a personal recognizance bond and he murdered two more people within four months. *Source: Dallas Morning News, August 9, 2006*

The Judges' Role in Probation

- The Dallas County Probation Department operates under the authority of, and is managed by, the elected judges of the state district courts. *Source: Texas Government Code, 76.002*
- Texas Government Code 76.003 requires the judges to create a Community Justice Council, made up of representatives from the police department, school district, city council, sheriff's department, state legislators, and county commissioners, to monitor the probation department's effectiveness and provide policy guidance. **The Community Justice Council has not met in at least three years to develop a meaningful plan.** *Source: Dallas Morning News, August 7, 2005*

Failure of Probation

- In April 2005, a departmental study found that the Dallas County Probation department is in disarray. There is no clear vision for supervising people on probation - no plan to improve the likelihood that offenders would alter their behaviors and become productive, law-abiding citizens. *Source: MGT of America, Consulting Firm*
- Last year, Dallas County Adult Probation lost track of more than 10,000 offenders they were supposed to be supervising. The number of probationers unaccounted for is up 65 percent

since 2000. Of the missing, 5,240 are on probation for felony offenses. *Source: Dallas Morning News, August 7, 2005*

- Dallas County Adult Probation officers are typically assigned caseloads of about 140 offenders. The goal, according to a departmental study, should be 60. *Source: Dallas Morning News, August 7, 2005*
- Probation officers are unable to effectively supervise offenders due to excessive workloads and staff shortages. *Source: PO's for Public Safety*
- The Dallas County Probation Department placed 900 offenders on automated (kiosk) reporting, thereby allowing them to report to a machine instead of a probation officer. About half of the 900 were on probation for felonies, including drug dealing, burglary, engaging in organized crime and, in a few cases, robbery. *Source: Dallas Morning News, September 18, 2005*

How the Citizens of Dallas Can Help

The primary function of government is to protect its citizens. The citizens of Dallas County deserve state district judges that will take an active role in managing probation and will adopt, as their primary objective, the promotion of public safety in their judicial decision-making. **Probation Officer's for Public Safety** supports the following candidates for state district judge: **Andy Chatham, Lena Levario, Carter Thompson, Robert Burns, Mark Stoltz, and Larry Mitchell.** These candidates have pledged to make public safety their primary objective by placing no felons on automated reporting, allocating the resources necessary to track down absconders, increasing the use of electronic monitoring, and limiting the practice of granting deferred adjudication probation to only the most mitigated first-degree felony cases. **The Fight Against Crime Starts at the Ballot Box. Please do your part and vote for these candidates.**