

ATTACHMENT

#1

Titus Co. Commissioners Court
Tax Rate and Budget Hearing
September 19, 2011

There were several false accusations made against me by Commissioners Boggs and Hockaday at Friday's budget hearing that I would like to elaborate on today. As I stood at the podium, the two commissioners accused me of using scare tactics and intimidating the court by mass e-mailing documents that had in fact been submitted by persons other than myself. One of the documents referenced was the proposed budget cuts submitted last Monday by Nigel Christopher, the other was a letter from Republican Party board members which was read in open court several weeks ago. Neither document was authored or signed by me, nor have I mass e-mailed them. One of the commissioners also accused me of calling for cuts in the Sheriff's Office, which is also a false accusation.

In regard to the numerous suggestions to cut county expenditures outlined by Mr. Christopher, I believe that he did a commendable job and spend a tremendous amount of time and energy reviewing the budget and compiling this data. As Judge Lee stated, I also agreed with some of the ideas and disagreed with others. I do not deny sending numerous informational mass e-mails regarding the county's budget and proposed tax increase! I have attempted to give taxpayers the facts, sending notification about the dates and times of public hearings and links to the proposed county budget. I have urged people to contact their commissioner about the proposed tax increases and to attend the public hearings if possible.

~~I have indeed expressed my opinion about the generous salaries and benefits of Titus county commissioners and the fact that no employee contribution is made to insurance coverage, which I believe needs to be addressed beginning with all elected officials. My opinion is that none of this can be interpreted as anything other than exercising my first amendment right to free speech and am frankly surprised that public opinion and involvement is viewed by these 2 commissioners as intimidation.~~

Commissioner Boggs also displayed an apparent strong bias against those who affiliate themselves with Tea Party philosophy of fiscal responsibility and limited government. When he tried to intimidate me as I stood at the podium making a statement, I asked if he was against public opinion or comment. He stated no, "just you and Eric". I believe that most taxpayers view increased tax rates as a non partisan issue and petty political comments and attitudes from this court should not be part of this discussion. As elected officials, party affiliation should have been put aside when you assumed this office. You were elected to serve all the citizens of this county whether they are Democrats like most of this court, Republicans, Independents or Tea Party conservatives. As an elected official, you are expected to respectfully listen to the taxpayers, whether you agree with their statements and opinions or not.

The format of Friday's budget workshop was for county employees and some elected officials to come forward and explain and defend department expenditures and job positions. After 3 1/2 hours, I was tired of what I felt were scare tactics initiated by this court. When I went to the podium and expressed my feelings and concerns about the people who were having to defend their expenses or even try to save their own job from budget cuts, the accusations from Commissioners Boggs and Hockaday that I mentioned previously started. Numerous false accusations and confrontational statements were made until another citizen in the audience came forward and interrupted the exchange between myself and the commissioners and stated that he didn't like the attacks directed at me. At one point, one of the commissioners even had a shouting exchange with another member in the audience about intimidation.

I believe that if this workshop had been a serious attempt to cut the budget, it would have started with the commissioners justifying their salaries, travel allowances and budgets for taxpayers in the audience. Instead, the Sheriff, a district judge, the county attorney, a DPS trooper, custodians and so on stepped to the podium one by one to speak about possible cuts to their departments or in some instances their jobs. ~~As I stated Friday, the only cuts that I have endorsed are much needed reductions in the salaries and travel allowances of Titus county commissioners and an evaluation of the county's health insurance program to make it more reflective of private sector standards.~~

Our commissioners are among the highest paid among 39 counties with our population range and rank in the top tier for the entire state of Texas. They have an annual salary of \$54,016, travel allowance of \$15,600 and insurance premiums of \$9,300, all funded by taxpayer dollars. While the total income of our county commissioners including benefits is \$78,916, the 2009 median household income in Titus county was \$37,553 and 18.4% had income below the poverty level. While taxpayers pick up the tab for commissioners health insurance with no personal contribution to the premium, 36% of adults in the county are uninsured. *According to US census data -*

Our county is facing a severe economic crisis with the pending closure of Luminant and confirmed closure at Welsh Power Plant and as I have mentioned in the past all reports indicate that Pilgrim's/JBS operation here is on life support. I believe that any and all recommendations made by taxpayers should be evaluated and at the same time this court should work diligently to begin preparing now for the years ahead.

Commissioners Boggs and Hockaday stated on Friday that people are scared and I agree with that statement but not with their opinion about who is using scare tactics. Neither myself or any other private citizen or our opinions about budget cuts that we state publically or in e mails is responsible for people being scared. People are scared because you are displaying a complete lack of leadership and comprehension about what a Luminant closure will mean for our county. People are scared because you will cut funding to volunteer fire

departments, when half of our population lives in rural areas and we are enduring the worse drought since the 1950's before you will take a pay cut yourself. People are scared because they suspect that you will cut funding to any county department or even eliminate jobs before you take a pay cut yourself. ~~People are scared because you can only come with \$999,999 of cut in a \$10 million budget.~~ We worry about what our taxes will skyrocket to if Luminant does indeed close and we have a commissioners court that appears to be unwilling or unable to make significant budget cuts.

We have entrusted you to be good stewards of our taxpayer dollars and if you simply raise our taxes without revising your own salaries, I believe that you are failing the taxpayers of this county. In response to the economic crisis we are facing, I am calling on you today to cut your own salary by 10% and your travel allowance by 50%. I don't believe that this is an unreasonable request since the average travel allowance for the 15 counties in Texas that are under 500 square miles is \$6,800.00 according to data published by the Texas Association of Counties. Your current travel allowance is more than double this amount. You are ranked number 2 among the 39 counties with our population for the salary/travel package you ~~are paid.~~ receive.

You are asking the taxpayers of Titus county to do our part and we are asking you to do the same-it's spelled pay cut. I would suggest that these salary and travel cuts be implemented on October 1, 2011, the beginning of your fiscal year.

Barbara Bruechner, Mt Pleasant Tea Party

ATTACHMENT

#2

Titus Co. Commissioners Court
Tax Rate and Budget Hearing
September 19, 2011

I am here again today because I was interrupted before I could finish my statements last Friday. My main point is that before you commissioners ask us taxpayers and county employees to make financial sacrifices because of this budget shortfall, let us examine your compensation first. Let us do it without personal or political issues and simply look at the facts.

These numbers come from the Texas Association of Counties Salary Survey of 2010. The first group of 39 counties with populations between 25,000 and 50 thousand shows an average base salary of approximately \$47,000. Your base salary is \$54,000, which is \$7,000 higher than the average. Their average travel compensation was approximately \$9,500. Your travel allowance is \$15,600 which is \$6,100 higher.

I then looked at the 19 counties that had budgets between 10 and 13 million. Their average base salary was \$39,200.00. Your \$54,000 is \$14,800 higher. There were 9 of these counties with data that averaged \$10,000 travel allowance compared to your allowance of \$15,600, placing you \$5,600 above the average. I then looked at all 254 counties with available data and found only 11 with higher travel allowances. Yours are higher than 95% of all Texas counties. Of these counties, Titus has 410 sq miles, while the other 10 range from 693 to 1,160 sq miles.

In order to justify \$15,600 in travel, you commissioners would have to drive 30,000 miles a year on county business at .50 cents a mile. This seems to be an incredible number since I understand this is about what a county deputy drives according to the Sheriff. It seems reasonable for a deputy covering the entire county, but is quite a stretch for a commissioner who is covering only his precinct, which is approximately 100 miles of road.

The conclusion that is inescapable, no matter how you crunch the numbers, is that Titus County Commissioners are paid on average disproportionately more than comparable counties. With these facts in mind, I urge you to make your first priority cutting your own compensation. I know that is not an easy thing to do, but it is the right thing to do. Although these cuts may not seem to have a significant mathematical impact on the budget, I am sure it would go a long way to reestablishing trust and respect from county employees and taxpayers.

Eric Bruechner, Mt. Pleasant Tea Party

2010 Texas Counties with Populations Between 25,000 & 50,000

County	Annual Budget (millions)	Travel Allowance	Commissioner's Salary	Total
Jim Wells	19.8	\$15,600.00	\$64,200.00	\$79,800.00
Titus	13	\$15,600.00	\$54,000.00	\$69,600.00
Wharton	22.5	\$11,900.00	\$57,700.00	\$69,600.00
Rusk	23.8	\$16,200.00	\$52,700.00	\$68,900.00
Hood	27.6	\$5,000.00	\$60,500.00	\$65,500.00
Polk	25.4	\$19,000.00	\$45,700.00	\$64,700.00
Jasper	8.9	\$18,000.00	\$45,300.00	\$63,300.00
Navarro	23.2	\$12,000.00	\$49,000.00	\$61,000.00
Madagorda	17.9	N/A	\$58,600.00	\$58,600.00
Waller	22.9	\$4,800.00	\$53,000.00	\$57,800.00
Erath	17.3	Vehicle	\$57,700.00	\$57,700.00
Burnet	20.8	Vehicle	\$57,000.00	\$57,000.00
Chambers	29.6	\$6,000.00	\$50,200.00	\$56,200.00
Atascosa	38.5	\$10,400.00	\$44,300.00	\$54,700.00
Medina	20.9	\$6,000.00	\$47,300.00	\$53,300.00
Austin	16.2	\$9,000.00	\$44,200.00	\$53,200.00
Lamar	20	Vehicle	\$51,500.00	\$51,500.00
Cooke	28.1	Vehicle	\$51,300.00	\$51,300.00
Wilson	10	Vehicle	\$51,300.00	\$51,300.00
Wood	17.5	Vehicle	\$51,300.00	\$51,300.00
Palo Pinto	14.3	Vehicle	\$50,900.00	\$50,900.00
Kleberg	13.5	\$6,000.00	\$44,200.00	\$50,200.00
Kerr	23.8	N/A	\$50,100.00	\$50,100.00
Kendall	22.2	\$5,200.00	\$44,500.00	\$49,700.00
Hopkins	16.3	Vehicle	\$48,900.00	\$48,900.00
Grimes	16.7	\$3,600.00	\$43,300.00	\$46,900.00
Hill	19.7	Vehicle	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
Cherokee	21	N/A	\$43,700.00	\$43,700.00
Fannin	13.5	Vehicle	\$43,000.00	\$43,000.00
Shelby	10.5	Vehicle	\$42,800.00	\$42,800.00
Washington	19.6	N/A	\$42,500.00	\$42,500.00
Cass	9.6	Vehicle	\$42,100.00	\$42,100.00
Hale	15.8	Vehicle	\$41,700.00	\$41,700.00
Val Verde	31.9	\$4,800.00	\$36,400.00	\$41,200.00
Bee	4	\$3,000.00	\$37,900.00	\$40,900.00
Upshur	17.8	N/A	\$39,500.00	\$39,500.00
Howard	13.2	N/A	\$35,200.00	\$35,200.00
Caldwell	15.4	N/A	\$32,300.00	\$32,300.00
Uvalde	8.9	N/A	\$19,100.00	\$19,100.00
	Average	\$9,561.11	\$46,920.51	\$51,333.33

Texas Association of Counties Salary Survey Website:
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Data Compiled from US Census & Texas Association of Counties Salary Survey Website By
MpTxTeaPartyPatriots.com

2010 Texas Commissioner's Salaries County Budgets Between 10 & 13 Million			
County	Commissioner's Salary	Travel Allowance	Total
Titus	\$54,000.00	\$15,600.00	\$69,600.00
Newton	\$41,000.00	\$21,000.00	\$62,000.00
Jackson	\$47,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$56,000.00
San Jacinto	\$40,600.00	\$12,500.00	\$53,100.00
Wilson	\$51,000.00	\$1,200.00	\$52,200.00
Tyler	\$40,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$52,000.00
Young	\$35,000.00	\$14,400.00	\$49,400.00
Archer	\$34,000.00	\$8,400.00	\$42,400.00
Gray	\$32,000.00	\$3,600.00	\$35,600.00
Maverick	\$25,000.00	\$7,900.00	\$32,900.00
Bosque	\$38,000.00	N/A	
Clay	\$41,500.00	N/A	
Dewitt	\$42,000.00	N/A	
Houston	\$43,000.00	N/A	
Lavaca	\$43,800.00	N/A	
Live Oak	\$33,000.00	N/A	
Moore	\$27,000.00	N/A	
Shelby	\$42,000.00	N/A	
Ward	\$50,000.00	N/A	
Willacy	\$24,300.00	N/A	
Average	\$39,210.00	\$10,560.00	\$50,520.00

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2010 Texas Counties / Less than 500 Sq Miles				
County	2010 Budget (millions)	Commissioner's Salary	Travel Allowance	Total
Galveston	219	\$92,200.00	\$10,800.00	\$103,000.00
Titus	13	\$54,000.00	\$15,600.00	\$69,600.00
Rockwall	35	\$63,800.00	\$4,200.00	\$68,000.00
Hood	27.6	\$60,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$65,000.00
Franklin	6.9	\$46,000.00	\$11,400.00	\$57,400.00
Madison	7.1	\$40,400.00	\$10,300.00	\$50,700.00
Somerville	15.2	\$37,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$45,000.00
Morris	4.7	\$37,800.00	\$6,500.00	\$44,300.00
Sabine	5	\$32,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$41,000.00
Marion	4.5	\$32,700.00	\$7,000.00	\$39,700.00
Aransas	20.3	\$18,600.00	\$3,600.00	\$22,200.00
Camp	4.5	\$39,300.00	N/A	
Delta	2.9	\$26,300.00	N/A	
Gregg	48.6	\$64,700.00	Vehicle	
Orange	35	\$63,000.00	N/A	
Average		\$47,186.67	\$8,309.09	\$55,081.82
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2010 Texas Counties Travel Allowance \$15,600 & Over						
County	Square Miles	County Roads (Miles)	Budget (millions)	Travel Allowance	Commissioner's Salary	Commissioner's Salary Per Rd. Mile
Titus	410	429	13	\$15,600.00	\$54,000.00	\$125.87
Jim Wells	864	539	19.8	\$15,600.00	\$64,200.00	\$119.11
Liberty	1160	708	34.5	\$15,800.00	\$68,000.00	\$96.05
Trinity	693	368	5	\$18,000.00	\$31,500.00	\$85.60
Kaufman	786	691	48.6	\$17,100.00	\$57,800.00	\$83.65
Wise	905	885	54	\$16,000.00	\$68,000.00	\$76.84
Freestone	877	645	16.3	\$16,200.00	\$47,700.00	\$73.95
Jasper	937	628	8.9	\$18,000.00	\$45,300.00	\$72.13
Newton	932	582	10.4	\$21,000.00	\$41,600.00	\$71.48
Polk	1057	792	25.4	\$19,000.00	\$45,700.00	\$57.70
Rusk	924	987	23.4	\$16,200.00	\$52,700.00	\$53.39
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Trinity	693	368	5	\$18,000.00	\$31,500.00	\$85.60
Kaufman	786	691	48.6	\$17,100.00	\$57,800.00	\$83.65
Wise	905	885	54	\$16,000.00	\$68,000.00	\$76.84
Freestone	877	645	16.3	\$16,200.00	\$47,700.00	\$73.95
Jasper	937	628	8.9	\$18,000.00	\$45,300.00	\$72.13
Newton	932	582	10.4	\$21,000.00	\$41,600.00	\$71.48
Polk	1057	792	25.4	\$19,000.00	\$45,700.00	\$57.70
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