

Last year, county commissioners discriminated against officers assigned to the jails when they said they were less important and should be paid less than patrol officers, even though they are equally trained and licensed. Now, commissioners have an opportunity to close the gap in salaries. If they don't, experienced corrections officers will keep looking to area law enforcement agencies for higher pay and Travis County will have to lower standards to find workers.

ARE YOU WILLING TO SACRIFICE YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY TO POLITICIANS WHO PLAY FAVORITES IN THE WORKPLACE?

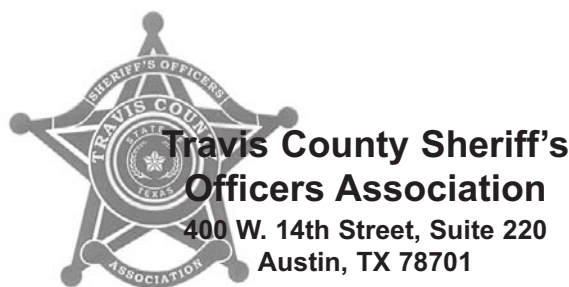
Nothing is more important to Travis County Sheriff's Officers than protecting your family from criminals. Contact commissioners and tell them to make public safety the top priority in 2003. Go to www.tcsOA.org

"Officer Needs Assistance"

Since January, there have been **60 assaults** on Travis County Corrections Officers, and more than **226 threats of physical violence** against them. Officers were called in to break up **408 fights** between inmates. Officers called **562 times for emergency backup...** that's almost 3 times per day.

Source: Travis County Sheriff's Office Corrections Bureau

Officer Layla Rendon is standing between the bad guys and your family.



PRSTD STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #3572
Austin, Texas

Photographs that appear inside may not be suitable for children.

Why do county politicians think less of Travis County Corrections Officers?

ARE OUR JOBS UNIMPORTANT?

Officer Rendon walks the toughest beat in the county.

She comes to work each day expecting to be cursed at, spit on, and have urine and feces thrown at her. No one wants to be where she is, and many are willing to do whatever it takes to get out.

Officer Layla Rendon, 31, proudly puts on the uniform of the Travis County Sheriff's Office every day and places herself between freedom and hundreds of confined criminals. In the past 11 years, she has been attacked by inmates numerous times. The single mother of two boys, one of whom has Down Syndrome, works the graveyard shift in the jail so she can see her children during the day. But because of staff shortages, she is routinely required to work extended hours and isn't able to take earned vacation time. She makes a lot of personal sacrifices to protect our community.

That's why it hurts to know that county commissioners think she and more than 800 other corrections officers are unimportant. Although corrections peace officers and law enforcement officers in Travis County have identical training and licensing, politicians ignored the majority of workers and gave patrol officers a big pay raise last year. They turned corrections officers into second-class workers.



Travis County corrections officers play a key role in the protection of our communities. They are well-trained professionals who risk their lives to protect the public from accused murderers, child predators, sex offenders, drug dealers and thieves. Corrections officers are dedicated public servants who are committed to keeping peace and order in a world of hardened criminals.

They do it because they care about our community.



Former Officer Jay Eckert (above) lost his right eye in a brutal attack by a maximum security inmate. As a result of the permanent disability, the officer had to discontinue his employment with the Sheriff's Office. **Officer Jeff Ford** (below) was overpowered and assaulted by a criminal. All ligaments were torn in his foot and seven months of painful rehabilitation was required before he could return to work. More than a year later, he still walks with metal screws and plates in his ankle.



LAST YEAR, COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SENT THE WRONG MESSAGE TO THE CITIZENS OF TRAVIS COUNTY.

They said officers who keep criminals in jail have less dangerous jobs, which makes them less important than other officers.

Their message cut at the heart and soul of hundreds of correctional officers who have been injured in the line of duty by inmates, and hundreds more who willingly take the risk on every shift.

Travis County correctional officers take their jobs very seriously. No one knows criminals like they do! That's why they stay on high alert around the clock ... while the politicians sleep.

In addition to the obvious dangers in the jail, there are hidden dangers that often have a more serious and long-term impact on officers.

Sr. Corrections Peace Officer Larry Laws (right), a 14-year veteran, is one of many officers in the Travis County Correctional Complex who uses a radio-free drive home every day to help him unwind from stress caused by hours of exposure to high levels of constant noise from 98 male inmates in a steel cell block. He suffers from frequent headaches, and over the years, he's noticed his hearing has suffered as well.

In February, Officer Laws prevented an escape when he caught an inmate digging around a cell window.

