



A RESOLUTION

A resolution of the county of Willacy, Commonwealth of Texas, strongly opposing the inclusion of the U.S. Marshals Service in the January 26, 2021, Executive Order eliminating the use of contractor-operated detention facilities.

WHEREAS, President Biden implemented an executive order to stop the Department of Justice from using contractor facilities for both the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS); and

WHEREAS, the BOP operates its own facilities and can absorb the incarcerated population currently in contractor facilities, but the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) does not own nor operate any of its own facilities and instead relies on contracts with private operators and jails to fulfill its important responsibility of detaining those awaiting trial or awaiting sentencing; and

WHEREAS, USMS requires the ability to procure detention space that best meets the needs of detainees and taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, contractor facilities such as the Willacy County Regional Detention Center have higher levels of USMS oversight and accountability than jails; and

WHEREAS, in February 2021, the Department of Justice's Inspector General found that contractor facilities used by USMS were safer, more accountable, and more responsive in mitigating risk from COVID-19 than jails used by USMS; and

WHEREAS, USMS attempts to house detainees close to federal courts and legal services to lessen dangerous and expensive transports and to ensure detainees have access to legal services; and

WHEREAS, contractor facilities are in close proximity to federal courts and legal services and USMS estimates that eliminating contractor facilities will place detainees at least 100 miles further away from legal services and cost \$75-\$100 million annually in additional transport expenses; and

WHEREAS, contractor facilities have wrap-around services such as legal support, medical care, and transport to/from legal proceedings that are tailored to meet the needs of short-term detained populations and adhere to federal performance-based detention standards in contrast with jails, which focus on state correctional needs and adhere to state standards; and

WHEREAS, USMS currently contracts with 16 contractor facilities, one of which is the Willacy County Regional Detention Facility, and estimates it will take 440 jails to find enough space to house detainees currently supported in these contractor facilities; and

WHEREAS, contractor facilities provide high-paying jobs in rural communities; and

WHEREAS, the Willacy County Regional Detention Facility building is owned by Willacy County and operated by a contractor; and

WHEREAS, eliminating contractor facilities from USMS would shut down Willacy County Regional Detention Facility and have significant and devastating impacts on Willacy County; it would:

- Eliminate over 200 jobs and over \$8.254 million in annual salaries from Willacy and surrounding counties
- Willacy County Unemployment rate recently increased by 1.1% to 13.8%.
- Eliminate jobs that pay 45% higher than the median household income.
- Willacy County current median household income is \$35,521.
- Eliminate \$400,000 in county revenue and over \$303,000 the city earns from utility usage at the detention facility.
- Harm business for over 193 vendors who provide goods and services to detainees in the Willacy County Regional Detention Facility
- Eliminate meal source in which Willacy County jail inmates are fed by 3 times a day.

WHEREAS, eliminating contractor facilities will cause detainees to be held in over a thousand different jails across the country, will reduce detainees' access to legal services, will lower accountability to USMS for safety and health standards, will lower quality of services for detainees, and will harm the economy of counties with contract facilities; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Willacy County remains committed to the important role the Willacy County Regional Detention Facility plays in supporting the mission of USMS, providing quality care to detainees, and supporting the economy of the community; and

RESOLVED, that Willacy County requests that the Executive Order be postponed for USMS until a complete analysis of the logistical, financial, and most importantly, human impacts are clearly examined and understood; and

RESOLVED, that Willacy County calls upon Texas government officials and the Biden Administration to meet their responsibility to Willacy County taxpayers to support local jobs and help maintain and build the economy following the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic; and


RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Willacy County legislative representatives, to Governor Abbott, and to the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas.

ADOPTED by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Willacy, the Commonwealth of Texas, this 8th day of April, 2021.

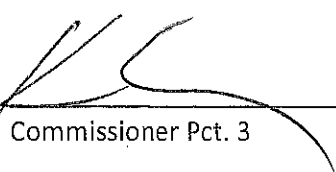
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS/COUNTY COUNCIL



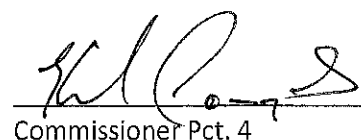
County Judge



Commissioner Pct. 1



Commissioner Pct. 3



Commissioner Pct. 4