



# HOUSTON POLICE OFFICERS' UNION

*Texas' Largest Police Union*

1600 State Street • Houston, Texas 77007 • 713.237.0282 • Fax 713.227.8450

## **Houston Police Officers Support Annise Parker on Crime**

By Ray Hunt, President, Houston Police Officers' Union

After reviewing Mr. Ben Hall's five point plan to address crime in Houston, it is clear that he is in full support of most of the initiatives Mayor Annise Parker instituted when she was sworn in as mayor of our city in 2010 and are currently being used by the hardworking men and women of the Houston Police Department.

Mayor Parker ran on a campaign promise to increase the collaboration between law enforcement organizations throughout our community. During Mayor Parker's watch, the Technology Services of the Houston Police Department has launched the new HPD Emergency Communications System. This system was thoroughly vetted to insure that it would conform to the needs of officers on the streets and investigators.

For the first time ever, every Houston police officer has been issued a hand held police radio. On or off duty, every police officer can now have immediate contact with the dispatcher and surrounding law enforcement agencies.

This is a huge plus for the Department as well as the citizens of our community who may need assistance from members of our organization.

During Mayor Parker's watch our Department has been able to increase the use of available technologies which includes camera technology surveillance. We have hundreds of cameras around our city and are adding more cameras each month.

While cameras do not replace a police officer and require monitoring, these cameras are one more useful tool in our arsenal to fight crime. Furthermore, as funding allows, our Department will expand on this particular type of surveillance strategy as well as implement other effective crime fighting strategies that come on line that will better enable Houston police officers do and even better job of protecting the public.

When Mayor Parker took office she worked with the Houston Police Officers' Union to reach approval on a five year labor agreement that would help police officers and tax payers. The five-year agreement meant HPD officers would not receive customary across the board pay raises for the first two years of the contract in order to help the city navigate the serious budget shortfalls of the first term in office.

The Houston Police Officers' Pension System also stepped up to the table and negotiated

with Mayor Parker in good faith to delay pension payments during the economic downturn. Our pension system trustees, like the HPOU leadership, worked with Mayor Parker to reach fair solutions to police officer compensation and pension funding issues.

Mr. Hall's strategy of having non-violent criminals pay off their sentences via community service work is something that would concern us, as well as the victims of the non-violent crimes. People who burglarize cars and homes could fall into this category as well as people who commit theft, prostitution, and even those who steal your automobile.

We're far more comfortable with the Texas Legislature having the continued authority to oversee our criminal prosecution system. Their constitutional authority to amend sentencing guidelines on any criminal matter in the entire state of Texas is the only sensible way to go.

Finally, Mayor Parker already has a program for creating jobs for first time offenders. Mr. Hall's proposal to expand this program raises significant risks of exposing violent offenders into positions that could endanger city staff and the public. Instead, we would rather see our Mayor dedicate efforts toward increasing the number of police academy classes so that staffing at HPD can continue to meet the increasing demands for public safety services in our city.

Ray Hunt, President  
Houston Police Officers' Union  
1600 State Street  
Houston, Texas 77007  
832.200.3400