

April 30, 2021

Texas House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768

RE: House Bill 20 – The Damon Allen Act

Dear Members:

We would like to thank Governor Abbott, Chairman Murr, and Chairwoman Collier for their outstanding collaboration on House Bill 20. Their ability to unite to find common ground on this emergency item is an inspiring act of leadership. As we analyze this legislation, it is apparent Chairman Murr has spent a substantial amount of time working with all stakeholders to create a comprehensive, practical, and compassionate solution to our state's broken pre-trial system.

Through leadership's collaborative efforts, we have found that the shared goals of pre-trial reform are to 1) ensure communities are safe by preventing high-risk defendants from being released, 2) provide individuals who pose little to no risk to their community an appropriate and attainable avenue to release, and 3) allow magistrates the discretion to make informed decisions in each unique case.

The Damon Allen Act does just that.

Specifically, by including the use of a pre-trial public safety assessment tool, House Bill 20 has set the precedent that pre-trial reform must prioritize a defendant's risk, rather than their financial means. The inclusion of this tool is imperative to the success of pre-trial reform efforts in Texas. Just as legislators use additional resources such as bill analyses and fiscal notes prior to voting on legislation, magistrates should have access to research-based tools to inform—but not dictate—their pre-trial release decisions.

Because of Chairman Murr's commitment, the Texas House of Representatives is being presented with a bill that has been substituted to address concerns and ensure we maintain the delicate balance between protecting public safety and preserving individual liberties.

As this legislation moves to the House Floor, we are hopeful that members will look to Chairman Murr for leadership on this bill, as he has been a thoughtful and diligent author. We are confident that the passage of House Bill 20 will bring us one step closer to maintaining Texas's reputation as a national model for improving public safety through effective criminal justice reform.

Sincerely,

Doug Deason  
Deason Capital Services

Genevieve Collins  
Americans for Prosperity-Texas

Timothy Head  
Faith and Freedom Coalition

RJ Trabulsi  
Texans for Lawsuit Reform

Glenn Hamer  
Texas Association of Business

Andy Kahan  
Crime Stoppers of Houston

Chris E. Wallace  
North Texas Commission

Joe Lonsdale  
Cicero Institute

Trey Newton  
Hispanic Republicans of Texas

Tamara Colbert  
Grassroots Gold

Abraham Enriquez  
Bienvenido USA

Jim and Robin Lennon  
Kingwood TEA Party

Kevin Roberts  
Texas Public Policy Foundation

Jorge Martinez  
The LIBRE Initiative

Mia Garza McCord  
Texas Conservative Coalition Research  
Institute

Orlando Sanchez  
Texas Latino Conservatives

Betty Cardenas  
Republican National Hispanic Assembly

Rania Mankarious  
Crime Stoppers of Houston

Frank Fuentes  
U.S. Hispanic Contractors Association

Justin Yancy  
Texas Business Leadership Council

Justin Keener  
Texans for Free Enterprise

Paul Hodson  
Grassroots Gold

Hayden Padgett  
Texas Young Republicans

Jennifer Haar  
Republican Women's Club of Katy

Cc: The Honorable Greg Abbott