

Waco Police Association

PO Box 1023
Waco, TX 76703
www.wacopa.org

October 30, 2008

Dear Waco Business Leader:

As you know, the Waco Police Association rented billboard space this month to bring attention to what rank and file police officers have known for years -- that the violent crime rate in our city is too high and the murder rate continues to rise.

There has been a lot of calculated political speculation from those in positions of power about our true motives and the reasons for our message to the public. As police officers, we see crime firsthand and the misery and suffering that accompanies it. Make no mistake -- this is about the public's safety and a surging crime rate. The WPA is committed to this community and we intend to be a part of bringing down that crime rate in spite of criticism from the usual detractors. The politicians have no idea how committed and serious we are.

We are police officers, not campaigning politicians. We did not seek this battle. Instead, it was brought to us by those in power who refuse to talk to the working men and women of Waco law enforcement. It was a difficult decision to rent the space, but our elected Board of Directors voted unanimously to put them up knowing full well that those who work diligently to conceal the crime rate and its impact on our community would send those with lots of time on their hands out to complain about our political action. But, that does not change the facts.

I quoted President John Adams when I spoke from the steps of City Hall last week: "Facts are stubborn things." Since we are police officers and not bureaucrats or politicians, we have a literal fascination with the truth. The truth is that crime in Waco is out of control and the politicians won't even take the time to meet with the local police association. Unlike the politicians, we understand that the public's trust of the police is based on our speaking the truth; therefore, we instinctually chose a path of full disclosure.

Someone has claimed that the City Council could not meet with us about the crime rate because we were involved in the meet and confer process and negotiating with the City on a proposed contract. That statement is not true. There is nothing in state law relating to the meet and confer process (Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 142.051 through 142.068) that prohibits or limits any kind of communication between elected officials and our association at any time.

The truth is the Waco City Council did not meet with us because they did not want to. It appears to us that they thought we would go away quietly and quit talking about the growing crime rate. Or, maybe they got bad advice from someone? Either way, our organization is deeply committed

to making our city safer and we intend to follow it to the logical conclusion of changing Waco for the better.

Over the course of our careers, we have come in contact with thousands of people like you, honest business people. Your businesses are about offering products or services and earning an honest profit for you, your employees, and your families. In recent years, your profits have dropped and your insurance rates have increased while our city leaders have played a dangerous game of pretend with a crime rate that is increasing. Waco's politicians and their token gestures of filling empty slots in the police department, which is understaffed per capita, has been void of any real forward thinking and any real leadership with a vision for future requirements necessary to police the City of Waco.

After months of attempting to present a police study that we commissioned and paid for ourselves, we still have not been able to gain an audience with the City Council. We began this effort with no idea of the stubbornness of those in political power. Our intent was simply to show some data to our elected officials. We now believe the only way the crime rate can ever be properly addressed as a political reality is when we have new leadership in this city.

Despite some statements by a few business people tied to the politicians at City Hall, we believe we have more in common with you, your business and your family than those who seek to question our motives of making this city safer for all. We no longer trust our elected officials to lead or to listen, so we will continue to take our message to the good people of Waco. We hope you will join us. Visit our website, www.wacopa.org, and read the positive comments from your customers who are urging us to stay in the fight.

Sincerely,

Anne Cyr, President

Gary Greene, Chairman
WPA Board of Directors

P.S. The most recent crime statistics available for the City of Waco from the FBI can be found on our website, www.wacopa.org.