

Office of Smith County Commissioner Precinct 1

Christina Drewry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Commissioner Christina Drewry Raises Concerns Over Sheriff's Directive Limiting Transparency and Possible Legal Violations

Smith County, TX — Smith County Commissioner Precinct 1, Christina Drewry is raising concerns about a directive issued by Sheriff Larry Smith that prohibits all employees of the Smith County Sheriff's Office from speaking with her about department operations. The directive, issued shortly after Commissioner Drewry questioned the Sheriff during a public Commissioners Court meeting about a grant tied to federal compliance, has disrupted her ability to fulfill her oversight responsibilities.

"This is about transparency, accountability, and protecting the taxpayers of Smith County," said Commissioner Drewry. "The voters put their trust in me to ask tough questions and ensure public money is spent wisely. That's exactly what I did—and I was met with silence and obstruction."

The Sheriff's directive threatens the ability of an elected official to carry out constitutional duties and raises significant concerns about access to public information, employee rights, and fiscal oversight.

Commissioner Drewry sought an opinion from Smith County District Attorney Jacob Putman on the legality of the directive. He declined to request an Attorney General's opinion, stating he did not believe any laws had been broken and that it was a "question of fact."

Among the issues Commissioner Drewry highlights:

Obstructed Oversight: The directive prevents staff engagement necessary for budget planning and policy review.

Employee Rights: Staff face the threat of termination for speaking to an elected official about departmental matters, raising First Amendment concerns.

Public Accountability: Restricted communication hampers transparency in how tax dollars are managed within one of the county's largest departments.

"When elected officials are punished for asking questions and employees are silenced by fear of being unemployed, government stops working for the people," Drewry stated. "I will not be intimidated into silence, and I will not abandon the duties I swore to uphold. Transparency isn't optional—it's foundational. The people of Smith County have a right to see how their government operates and how their money is spent. I will keep fighting for that right—every day, for every taxpayer."

For further comment or to request interviews, please contact Commissioner Drewry directly.

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