

JIM LEITNER
FIRST ASSISTANT



CRIMINAL JUSTICE CENTER
1201 FRANKLIN, SUITE 600
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77002-1901

PATRICIA R. LYKOS
District Attorney
Harris County, Texas

December 13, 2011

Public Information Office
(713) 755-3320

DPS SELECTION LAUDED BY DA PAT LYKOS

(District Attorney Statement Regarding DPS Contract)

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is the state's premier law enforcement agency. DPS is the state's authority and expert on breath alcohol testing. When the Houston Police Department's three lab technicians quit their jobs, this virtually halted DWI prosecution in the courts, delaying justice and costing the county financially. DPS stepped in on an emergency basis and did an extraordinary job.

The Harris County District Attorney's Office has to be assured of the professionalism, excellence, and integrity of its expert witnesses. We have absolute confidence in the Department of Public Safety.

Of great significance is the fact that with DPS providing breath testing services to 18 law enforcement agencies, including HPD and the Sheriff's Department, any officer can now take their DWI suspect to any DPS supervised breath testing location in Harris County. This has a force multiplier effect, as the officers can return to service more quickly, preventing crime and providing a more efficient administration of justice.

We have been very concerned about outsourcing to non-law enforcement entities and the problems created by personnel turnover. This results in needless resetting of court cases, impacting inmates awaiting trial, witnesses, and law enforcement. The DA's Office recommended the breath alcohol testing services contract with DPS. The decision, of course, and the negotiations belonged to Harris County Commissioners Court and the Harris County Purchasing Office.

It was the right thing to do. Our citizens and communities are safer by getting more drunk drivers off the streets and keeping more police officers on the streets. I assure you, as District Attorney of Harris County, my top priority is—and will remain—being tough on crime and protecting the public. (end)