



Gavel & Badge

The Official Newsletter for the Justices of the Peace and Constables Association

May 2025

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT HOLLY WILLIAMSON

Dear JPCA Members,

As I sit down to pen this final message, my heart is overflowing with gratitude, and admiration.

Serving as your President has been an honor. Together, we have achieved so much: advancing our legislative priorities, enriching our education programs, and strengthening the bonds that unite us as a dedicated community of public servants. It's YOUR hard work and sacrifice that make this association not just a professional organization, but a family. I am forever grateful for the friendships I've forged along the way; these relationships are treasures I will cherish for a lifetime.



The commitment of everyone involved—volunteers and supporters—has been nothing short of inspiring. Texas is fortunate to have each and every one of you making our state a better place, day after day.

I hope to see you all at the upcoming conference in El Paso, where we will gather under the banner of "Shining a Light on Justice". Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the trust, support, and friendship you have given me. Again, it has been an honor to serve alongside you, and I am grateful beyond words for the opportunity to have been part of this incredible association.

God bless you all.
Judge Holly Williamson
President

THANK YOU TO OUR TOP 2025 EL PASO SPONSORS!



WELCOMING NEW JUDGES AND NEW CONSTABLES

Taking the oath of office as a Judge or Constable is more than just a ceremonial moment—it's the start of a demanding, high-stakes journey in leadership, law enforcement, and community service.

Across The State, we've welcomed several newly elected Judges and Constables who now bear the responsibility of upholding justice, protecting their communities, and managing the daily operations of their offices.

The Challenge of Taking Office: For those stepping into this role for the first time, the learning curve can feel overwhelming. From staffing decisions and budgeting to civil process enforcement and community relations, a Judge or Constable's role is far more than what's seen on the surface. Many inherit offices with long-standing procedures, complex cases, and immediate demands, making the transition from campaign trail to active leadership both exciting and daunting.

One of the first major steps for new Judges and Constables is attending the Mandatory Training School put on by The State of Texas, where they gain critical legal knowledge, administrative skills, and tactical insights to ensure they are fully prepared to execute their duties with professionalism and integrity. This training lays the foundation, but the real work begins when they return to their precincts, where every decision, every action, and every challenge shapes the future of their office.

A Strong Support System in JPCA: The good news? No Judge or Constable walks this path alone. JPCA exists to provide training, mentorship, and advocacy, ensuring that every Judge or Constable—whether newly elected or a seasoned veteran—has access to the resources and guidance needed to succeed.

We want to personally encourage every new Judge or Constable to take full advantage of the network of experience available within JPCA. Reach out to fellow Judges or Constables, seek mentorship from those who have walked this road before, and never hesitate to ask questions. The strength of our association lies in the knowledge we share and the unity we build.

2025 TJCTC & TAC LEGISLATIVE TRAININGS

Learn about the latest legislation at an upcoming events from the Texas Justice Court Training Center (TJCTC) or the Texas Association of Counties (TAC)! Register today for in-person or virtual training!

Judges & Court Personnel

Corpus Christi: Aug. 18
San Marcos: Aug. 25
Virtual (Morning): Aug. 26
Beaumont: Aug. 28
DFW (Grapevine): Sep. 3
Longview: Sep. 5
Lubbock: Sep. 15
Virtual (Afternoon): Sep. 17

Constables & Clerks

Corpus Christi: Aug. 18
San Marcos: Aug. 25
Beaumont: Aug. 28
Longview: Sep. 5
Virtual (Afternoon): Sep. 10

Judges, Constables, & Clerks

TAC Legislative Update, Austin: Aug. 27-29



REGISTRATION ENDS JUNE 13 at 1:00 AM

Visit JPCA.COM for details and registration.

Get ready for an engaging and informative week at JPCA 2025! The agenda kicks off Monday with cutting-edge insights into civil process technology and high-risk writs. Tuesday dives into the roots of justice with "Front Porch Justice," followed by a dynamic session on working with county stakeholders to improve safety. Wednesday brings practical discussions on complex service issues, receiverships, due process, and evictions. On Thursday, expect hands-on problem-solving in writ scenarios and thoughtful takes on commercial driving laws and property exemptions. The week wraps up Friday with a powerful leadership session, "Lead Yourself First," to inspire and empower. It's a packed agenda designed to educate, energize, and elevate!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES FROM JPCA

By Jama Pantel, Travis County Constable Office, Precinct 5

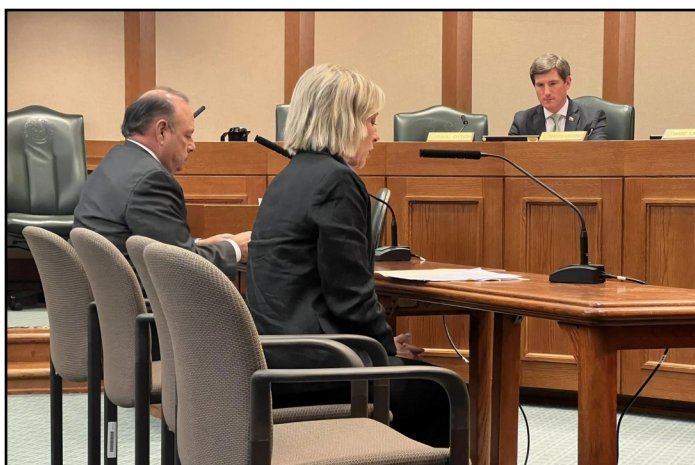
While many members of JPCA are familiar with our annual conference or regional trainings, fewer may realize that a dedicated group of your peers works year-round on your behalf: the Legislative Committee.

JPCA is more than an educational network—it's an active, voluntary statewide organization with several working committees committed to strengthening the roles of Justices of the Peace, Constables, and their clerks. Among these, the Legislative Committee plays a vital role by reviewing every Texas House and Senate bill that could impact our work in the courtroom, on patrol, or at the clerk's desk.

Throughout the legislative session, the committee tracks proposals affecting our jurisdiction, authority, administrative responsibilities, and funding. Our members study bill language, flag concerns, and share feedback with the JPCA board and partners. In doing so, the committee helps ensure that our collective voice is heard at the Capitol and that our interests are represented.

The committee's goal is to keep members informed, represented, and respected. If you'd like to learn more or get involved, reach out—there's always room at the table for committed voices like yours.

Judge Wayne Mack, Chair of the 2025 Judicial Legislative Committee, Constable Larry Gallardo, Chair of the 2025 Constable Legislative Committee, and President Holly Williamson testified in the Capital on a variety of bills, including those impacting education, rural funding, and judicial discretion.



JPCA 89th SESSION AT A GLANCE

By Amy Bruno, Texas Association of Counties

It's hard to believe that it is the end of May and the 89th Legislative Session is drawing to a close. Reflecting on the work we've done this session and leading up to it, we have accomplished a lot. The word that comes to mind for this session is change. The Association is working with a new TAC legislative consultant (me), a different lobbyist, a new federal administration, a new Texas House Speaker, a new House committee structure, and 35 new members between the Texas Senate and House of Representatives. With that change comes a lot of enthusiasm and the need to educate legislators and their staff on the important role that constables and justices of the peace have in county government.

We approached the opportunity to educate members of the Legislature and their staff with two planned events: the Freshman Legislators Breakfast in January and JPCA Day in March. President Holly Williamson coordinated the months-long planning on both events to make them successful.

Following the January breakfast and throughout session, JPs and Constables made weekly visits to Austin to meet with members and their staff and to testify at hearings. Thanks to the seasoned leadership of Constable Larry Gallardo and Judge Wayne Mack and their respective legislative committees, we were able to track bills that impact JPCA, identify bill concerns early on and discuss those issues with the member's office and offer changes. We had private process server language removed from bills. Judge Williamson testified to the Senate Finance committee about the importance of the Judicial and Court Personnel Training Fund in Senate Bill 1, the budget.

We also worked with offices to file JPCA priority legislation, and have been successful on that front, as well. Bills still being worked on include:

- **HB 2176** by Harless and **SB 1221** by Hughes, ensuring JPs and Constables are included in court security committees. HB 2176 passed the House and was referred to Sen. Hughes' Jurisprudence Committee, where it was then incorporated into the omnibus courts bill, SB 2878.
- **HB 2282** by J. Lopez, increasing the warrant recovery fee from \$50 to \$75. This bill is on the Senate Intent Calendar.
- **HB 2492** by Bowers, requiring law enforcement to hold an individual for a cooling off period in certain family violence cases. This bill is also on the Senate Intent Calendar.
- **SB 1896** by Huffman, requiring law enforcement officials to provide magistrates with the information necessary to issue an order of emergency protection. This bill is set on the Saturday House Calendar.

The reputation of JPCA is solid and their input is sought. Members contacted JPCA seeking feedback on issues such as truancy and school discipline, evictions and squatting, and giving property owners the option to bring an appeal of an appraisal review board order to justice courts. This kind of reputation isn't just given, it is earned. Many volunteer hours are spent by JPCA members in the halls of the Capitol building and nurturing relationships inside the building so the Association can have successful sessions.

I'll finish as Judge Mack always closes his TAC Tuesday Morning Breakfast JPCA report, we are stronger together.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

*By Deputy Constable Dwain Read,
Ochiltree County*

I bet at times many of you feel the sentiments expressed in the Psalms, chapter 42-43. To some, God intellectually is present everywhere, but spiritually, he seems many times far away. Such a feeling can produce a sense of loneliness of the soul.

It could be when you are in a sorrowful situation, dealing with grief, and you get overwhelmed. Or maybe it is a time of temptation or trial, and it is a time when you sense an unusual need for God, you want his presence and can't seem to get there.

I believe many times our souls become battlegrounds fighting discouragement and the like. It is indeed times like these we need encouragement, and these Psalms speak words of encouragement.

The question today is how can we overcome our discouragement?

As I looked at Psalms 42-43, I found one commentator that pointed out the vital role the Psalmist's memory played in strengthening him during a time of distress. You see, when God seemed so far away, the Psalmist recalled the times when he seemed so near.

And so, this suggests the importance of storing up in the mind experiences that give help in the day of struggle. Therefore, we should store up in our memories our experiences with God in times of joy in order that his presence may be real to us in times of discouragement and depression.

Whether you are a Judge, Constable, Deputy Constable, or Clerk, there are situations and times you are involved in that may cause you to be discouraged.

One man said this, "One who does not learn to sing in the day scarcely will find a song to sing in the night."

Do not be discouraged, but remember that we have a God who is still in control and supplies our every need.

May God richly bless you today!



GREAT ADVICE FOR YOUR PRECINCT

QUESTION: Is there a website where the court can get a list of all convictions that need to be reported to Texas DPS. Does the charge of No Tail Lamp need to be included in our ACCR?

Answer: YES. The full list of reporting requirements for DPS can be found in the Recordkeeping and Reporting Deskbook starting on page 37. Any questions about specific reporting requirements should be made to DPS, as they may change their interpretation of the statutes or rules from time to time.

QUESTION: Can a cdl driver get a \$20.00 dismissal on a expired registration for a commercial tank if he shows proof of the renewal. It was renewed after he was given the citation?

Answer: The answer depends on the actual registration charge. Assuming the offense charged is Sec. 502.407, 502.473, or 502.475(a)(3) of the Transportation Code, then yes, assuming they have met all the other provisions of the compliance dismissal statute. See the Compliance Dismissals chart on P. 61 of the Criminal Deskbook. However, if the violation is instead under Chapter 643 of the Transportation Code, such as a cab card offense or failure of the motor carrier to register with DMV, there is no 'compliance dismissal' available based on those statutes. Also, please note that not all compliance dismissals have a reimbursement fee of \$20. Please make sure you are checking the specific statute to ensure you are charging the correct amount. This information is also included in our Compliance Dismissals chart.

QUESTION: I received a call from a law firm here in El Paso who has been told that they have been told by certain JP courts, that they need to file and pay for a Writ of Possession per person who are occupying the property. This is first I have heard of this, is this correct?

Answer: If there is more than one occupant at a leased premises, the owner may obtain a writ of possession for one occupant but not another. For example, a the owner may want the tenant to remain, but want the tenant's adult child to be removed. However, there is no reason why a single writ of possession could not be applicable to all occupants.

QUESTION: Plaintiff & Defendant reside at the same address. Plaintiff is evicting Defendant. Service by Constable is given to Plaintiff who is over the age of 16. Is this ok?

Answer: No.

QUESTION: Does the affidavit for substitute service by a Constable have to be notarized? Can the Constable turn it in to the Court with just his signature along with the clerk of the court's signature?

Answer: An affidavit does not have to be notarized by a notary. It does need to be sworn, but they can swear to the document before a justice court clerk, with the clerk signing the document to certify that it was sworn. Please see p. 49-50 of TJCTC's Officeholding Deskbook.

JPCA DAY AT THE CAPITAL—HIGHLIGHTS & CONNECTIONS

