



April 15, 2026

The Honorable John Whitmire
Mayor of Houston
900 Bagby St
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Mayor Whitmire,

Governor Abbott's threat to strip \$110 million in public safety funding from Houston is an attempt to bully our city for doing what is right, what is legal, and what upholds the Constitution. The premise that Houston must either repeal this ordinance or lose funding is a false choice designed to force compliance through fear. Those are not the only options.

Houston has a clear legal path forward. I urge you and the City Attorney to immediately file a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) to prevent the State from withdrawing funds and seek a declaratory judgment affirming that this ordinance is lawful. If we act now and file, the court will issue an opinion as early as today, providing City Council with critical guidance before any rushed decision is made regarding repeal. There is no funding that will be put at risk by seeking this emergency relief ahead of the State's April 20th deadline.

As legal experts have made clear, the State's position is unlawful. This ordinance, which we both voted for, is fully compliant with Senate Bill 4. It does not restrict communication with federal authorities or prevent enforcement of criminal law. It ensures officers remain focused on solving crime.

We have seen this legal approach succeed. Harris County has repeatedly challenged unlawful state and federal overreach and prevailed – restoring critical funding for an immigrant legal defense fund, refugee healthcare, and defeating allegations against defunding the police. Houston should do the same.

The Governor is not above the Constitution and cannot claim to support public safety while threatening to defund police, firefighters, and emergency responders. This is not about internal disagreement. It is about whether Houston will stand up to unlawful pressure from the State. If we yield, we set a dangerous precedent that the State can bulldoze over lawful city policies and constitutional rights whenever it chooses.

The law is on Houston's side. The path forward is clear.

Houstonians deserve a city that will stand up for them, defend its laws, and protect its residents. I respectfully urge you to take immediate legal action.

Sincerely,

Alejandra Salinas
Houston City Council Member, At-Large 4