

**Statement:**

I have been a humble public servant to ALL Starr County residents for over 37 years and have always gone above and beyond to ensure the safety of the community. I feel that I need to disclose the following as a means of information to you, the residents of Starr County. The Commissioners' Court has felt it necessary to cut the Sheriff's Office budget by about \$400,000 including \$100,000 in fuel for patrol units. They believe that the patrol units can operate on \$50,000 of fuel per year which is about what we use in a three (3) month period. Starr County, Texas encompasses over 1,200 square miles with 68 miles of border with Mexico.

The commissioners also saw it fit to cut 11 positions, including the Courthouse Security putting considerably less officers on patrol. They also cut my salary by close to 16 percent.

I would also like to inform you that only one marked patrol unit has been purchased with Starr County Funds in the past nine years. All the fleet of Starr County Sheriff's Office vehicles have been purchased through Government Grants or drug seizures. My office depends on forfeiture funds for all safety equipment, tires, uniforms, and even supplement vehicle repairs. We operate on a very limited budget as it is and now these cuts have really put a dent on all operations in the department.

The jail houses over 270 prisoners with about 60 % being federal inmates including MS 13 members and others that need constant supervision. This decision has put my officers at high risk not to mention the compromise in security to our communities.

My department has been working diligently to deter border violence, but with less personnel and fuel cuts, the task would be nearly impossible.

My personnel at the Sheriff's Office took a voluntary pay cut of \$2,056 to ensure that no more jobs would be lost. These officers who put their lives on the line for all of us day in and day out and are already grossly underpaid, and now they, together with their families, will have to go with even less.

This severe budget cuts put you the citizens at a security risk since less units will be available for patrol and less staff to operate the Starr County Detention Center.

Our commitment to your safety stands firmly and we will continue to work tirelessly to the best of our ability with what little resources we have left to ensure the safety of our residents.

I would like to thank Starr County Judge Eloy Vera and Commissioner Pct. 4 Ruben D. Saenz for their integrity and continued support by voting against the budget cuts.

God Bless Starr County!

Your Sheriff Rene "Orta" Fuentes