

November 30, 2015

James D. Bethke  
Executive Director  
Texas Indigent Defense Commission  
209 W. 14<sup>th</sup> St, Room 202  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Bethke:

We are writing today in support of Hidalgo County's participation in the Regional Public Defender Office for Capital Cases (RPDO). We understand the legislature allocated \$500,000 over the FY16/17 biennium to partially fund a capital public defender program in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. We further understand that Cameron County has elected not to participate with the program. After consideration of the RPDO proposal to open a satellite office to provide representation to indigent defendants charged with capital murder, Hidalgo County will enter into an inter-local agreement with Lubbock County to provide matching funds to open an office in our jurisdiction and establish the terms of the services to be provided by the RPDO.

Implementation of the RPDO program will also affect the district courts in Hidalgo County. The district judge in Hidalgo County have met with the Chief Defender of the RPDO, Jack Stoffregen, and have agreed to participate with the program. The district judges will appoint the RPDO to represent indigent defendants in capital murder cases according to the procedures and caseload limits established for the office in the inter-local agreement.

We look forward to this new partnership with the Texas Indigent Defense Commission and Lubbock County to provide effective representation to capital murder charged defendants in Hidalgo County.

Sincerely,

Ramon Garcia  
Hidalgo County Judge

Roberto "Bobby" Flores  
Presiding Judge, 139<sup>th</sup> District Court  
Local Administrative District Judge, Hidalgo County