



Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association

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A Member of the National Electronic Security Alliance

May 23, 2018

Dear Sunset Advisory Commission members,

The Texas Burglar & Fire Alarm Association (TBFAA) appreciates the Sunset Commission's hard work and dedication as you receive public input on the important issues raised in the Sunset Staff Report on the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).

TBFAA supports the Commission Staff's conceptual goals of reducing inefficiencies and overregulation of the private security industry, and we offer our thoughts on the best specific pathways for the state to achieve those goals. In that vein, there are certain aspects of the Commission Staff recommendations with which TBFAA is in full agreement.

- We agree that there is no need to require registrations for owners and shareholders who do not directly provide security services to the public. But we feel that it is appropriate to retain current law to register owners or shareholders who visit a home/business or perform monitoring, sales, installation or service, because they gain access to sensitive information including locations of valuables and routines.
- TBFAA agrees with the need to eliminate the licensure requirement for telematics companies.
- We applaud the Commission staff's call for more effective use of technology and greater transparency in regulatory operations. We agree that "information, like the number of licenses probated, suspended, and revoked for each program, is not available, and as a whole, the lack of publicly available information significantly reduces the transparency of DPS' regulatory operations."
- We also support the Commission staff observation that "Agencies should have a clear process for determining if a licensee needs to be inspected, rather than meeting arbitrary quotas, and identify what risk factors to consider for conducting an inspection, such as recent complaints, past violations or disciplinary actions, or significant changes in business management. Clear, risk-based inspection policies also keep regulated individuals on notice of the agency's expectations." Inspecting or auditing companies each and every year, apparently due to their proximity to the interstate or local DPS office, is an unnecessary burden on both the company and DPS.
- We also support the Commission Staff's effort to stop treating each registration held by an individual separately. Simplifying the structure to create an endorsement system is the way to go. Many individuals have multiple roles and a single registration with multiple endorsements would save time and resources for DPS and regulated companies.

The Private Security Board Should Retain its Authority

TBFAA strongly opposes the Commission Staff recommendation to reconstitute the Private Security Board (PSB) as a mere advisory committee. TBFAA believes this would be a huge mistake from a public safety standpoint.

- The Commission Staff has identified examples of questionable enforcement action for criminal convictions that were ultimately corrected by the PSB after almost a year of litigating these cases. The Commission Staff noted that far "from being isolated incidents, DPS denied more than 1,400 private security applications for criminal history violations in fiscal year 2017."
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- While we agree that the lack of clarity of jurisdiction for the PSB, DPS and the Public Safety Commission creates "dueling regulation, inefficiencies, and unnecessary risks" we disagree on the solution. The Commission has recognized the focus on law enforcement by DPS. We agree with the observation of PSB Chair James that "Based on the published, limited biographies of the five-member Public Safety Commission, none of them have

experience in the business of investigations or security.” Removing the authority of the subject matter experts at the PSB would only reinforce the law enforcement focus in DPS.

- Requiring approval of rules by PSB, DPS and the Public Safety Commission can add significant delay. The solution is to give the PSB authority over the rules and enforcement actions. DPS should be allowed to carry out investigations and prosecutions of cases without the need to consider subjective elements of the cases. The PSB should be a first line of adjudication of contested cases. This would allow the Public Safety Commission to focus its expertise on law enforcement and reduce the workload on the SOAH.
- The PSB has provided appropriate oversight over the regulatory process since it was established in 1969, there is no reason to discontinue this effective tradition.

One Criterion for Background Checks Does Not Fit All DPS Programs

We support the creation of consistent criterion for background review for private security applicants. In a perfect world, a single criteria for applying mitigating factors to criminal history evaluations for all DPS programs would make sense. In reality, a higher standard is appropriate for private security applicants. Texas citizens expect that private security registrants have not committed burglaries, robberies or assaults. Greater leniency may be appropriate for other DPS programs. We agree with DPS that “Ensuring that the public is not put at risk by security personnel with disqualifying criminal records is central”

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Private Security Salespersons, who visit the customers business or home, gain access to the design of systems and to information on vulnerabilities of the citizens they give estimates to. Continued protection of Texas citizens requires that criminals are prevented from providing these services. Privately conducted background checks are not as extensive as those conducted by DPS. While TBFAA supports easing the burden of regulation on these professionals including reducing or eliminating training requirements, full deregulation is not appropriate. TBFAA can support deregulation of sales that are performed over the phone or over the counter, if the salesperson does not visit the home or business.

Affiliation with Licensed Companies Should Remain a Requirement

Requiring private security professionals to be affiliated with a licensed company provides a public safety benefit. In 2017, the Commission reports 137,699 individuals were licensed under 9,209 companies. Allowing the 137,699 to freelance directly to the public or between several companies would create an enforcement nightmare for DPS. Currently, DPS relies on the qualified manager at each company to enforce the rules and regulations. Eliminating this requirement would remove this critical link in the regulatory process. It would also increase costs to the consumer, because these independent agents would all need to incur insurance costs now absorbed by the companies. Consumers would have no assurance that their providers know the law or rules, have a physical address, are not employing unregistered individuals, or are not engaging in a multitude of activities and omissions that are highly detrimental to the public welfare.


Retaining Requirements for Managers is Key

Requiring that each company have a manager who has passed an exam and has appropriate experience helps to protect Texas citizens. Having an experienced manager who knows the law and rules and is held accountable promotes compliance with the law. Eliminating these key allies with DPS to encourage compliance, would increase the demand on DPS and reduce compliance with the law, putting Texas citizens at risk.

We Stand Ready to Help

TBFAA hopes to continue to have a constructive dialogue with the Sunset Advisory Commission members, Sunset Staff, and DPS about the best path forward. We thank you for your continued service to the Great State of Texas.

Sincerely



Kelly Ryan
TBFAA President



South Texas Alarm Association
716 West Byrd Blvd. • Universal City • TX 78148 • 210-402-6262
www.southtexasalarm.com

May 2018

RE: Sunset Report on Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)

The South Texas Alarm Association fully supports the Texas Burglar and Fire Alarm Association's position regarding the Sunset Report on DPS.

Complete deregulation of Private Security will ultimately put the great citizens of Texas at risk. The Private Security Board must retain their authority and independence – as they provide the only 'real-world' experience to effectively oversee the Private Security industry.

Furthermore, for too long has unlicensed activity been an unaddressed issue. The DPS has focused enforcement solely on Companies who seek to comply rather than Companies who choose to blindly ignore licensing and regulation requirements. This lack of enforcement, or selected enforcement, has not gone unnoticed by the Private Security Industry, and has been corroborated by the Sunset reports finding of "lack of publicly available information significantly reduces the transparency of DPS' regulatory operations".

The Private Security Industry, and the citizens of Texas, deserve a properly regulated industry with rules and regulations enforced across the State.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Harper", written over a horizontal line.

Stephen Harper

President – South Texas Alarm Association



False Alarm Reduction Association

10024 Vanderbilt Circle #4
Rockville, MD 20850
301.519.9237 Fax 301.519.9508
www.faraonline.org

May 23, 2018

Dear Sunset Advisory Commission members,

The False Alarm Reduction Association (FARA) is an organization committed to reducing false alarms and saving resources that might otherwise be wasted in responding to false alarms. Membership is primarily made-up of government and public safety agencies, along with alarm industry and other professionals from across the US and Canada.

FARA supports keeping the Private Security Board in place and not changing it to an advisory board. We know firsthand that regulating the alarm industry is different than traditional law enforcement duties. Proper regulation requires focus on how best to protect consumers by properly regulating the industry.

FARA also supports continuing to regulate salespeople. Alarm salespeople play a key role in the design of alarm systems. they decide how many sensors to use and what type of system to use. It takes education to make the proper selections. Improper selection leads to false alarms. Citizens also reveal vulnerabilities and where their valuables are kept during their meetings with salespeople. Citizens expect and deserve to know that salespeople have undergone a background check.

We believe that private industry should work together with regulatory services to create and support good public policy as it relates to the citizens of Texas. We also believe that proper licensing, registration, and training of alarm companies in Texas promotes a safer environment for the consumer and protects responding officer by reducing false alarms.

Sincerely

Kerri McDonald
FARA President



Acadian

Monitoring Services

Security | Fire | Video | Access Control | Medical

May 23, 2018

Dear Sunset Advisory Commission,

When I first joined the alarm industry as a sales person in 2007 and was licensed I was told it was to protect the citizen of Texas. I believe that it still true today. Alarm sales are conducted in the home or office not in a remote store front location. By removing the requirement to undergo background check and licensing from sales people or anyone who enters a home or place of business we as an industry would not be protecting the citizens. Under a Class B license this would also encompass companies that sell closed circuit television which could allow a RSO to sell a system and retain the login information and check back in at a later date. A quick Google search "alarm salespeople criminals" will produce a plethora of articles, none of which were in Texas, why, because we are required to do our due diligence during the background check and hiring process.

I agree that limiting licensing requirement to those only that participate in the day to day operations and not burden fiduciary partners with fingerprints and background checks. However I feel that by removing those requirements they still should have accountability which would fall under the qualified manager to maintain the basic requirements required by the State Comptrollers office. By allowing technicians to work as independent contractors accountability is lost. If a certified Texas Law Enforcement Officer wants to work an extra job it has to be approved by his superior, why would we allow a guard or a technician to have a liberty that is not offer to Law Enforcement?

I began my career as a sales person in 2007, in 2003 I went to work on the wholesale side of our industry and guiding people and companies thru the PSB process of licensing and in 2015 receiving an appointment from Governor Abbott's office as the board member representing the alarm industry. I have seen DPS-PSB go thru many changes and over the past few years those have been monumental changes from manual processing applications to everything being automated, from having to wait 60 to 90 days to receive a license to licenses arriving within a couple of weeks.

It has been my pleasure to serve on the PSB board and with the fine men and women who protect the citizens of Texas. I admire the committee's dedication and concerns but the security industry is unique and requires a background in security for proper insight. I believe that insight is shared with DPS.

Respectfully,



Debbra G. Ulmer

National Sales Representative

Private Security Board Member



Houston Gulf Coast Alarm Association

Dedicated to Excellence and Professionalism

May 23, 2018

Dear Sunset Advisory Commission members,

The Houston Gulf Coast Alarm Association (HGCAA) appreciates the Sunset Commission's hard work and dedication as you receive public input on the important issues raised in the Sunset Staff Report on the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).

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Sincerely

Van Mayorga
HGCAA Vice-President



P.O BOX 836635
RICHARDSON, TX 75083-6635

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Kelly Jim Keller
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