



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Charley Wilkison Announces Retirement; Robert Leonard Appointed as New Executive Director of CLEAT**

**Austin, Texas**—Longtime Executive Director Charley Wilkison has announced his retirement from the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT) effective Dec. 31. Wilkison has served the organization for 31 years, hired in August 1994, and named Executive Director in July 2013.

Wilkison's retirement marks the end of an era for CLEAT.

“Charley’s impact on the organization as a union activist, registered lobbyist and finally as Chief Executive Officer moved the needle of officer employment rights during volatile and politically challenging times,” said President Marvin Ryals.

“During Charley’s tenure, CLEAT experienced significant membership growth, expanded its legislative influence, and strengthened its support for rank-and-file law enforcement officers throughout the state,” Ryals said. “Under his leadership, CLEAT became a powerful voice advocating for the rights and safety of law enforcement personnel, working to secure vital resources and policies that benefit officers on and off duty.”

“It’s always been an honor to serve Texas’ Finest,” Wilkison said. “I’m grateful I had this opportunity to continue service to Texas in such a meaningful way. Although it’s difficult not to be lured into fighting one more skirmish or accomplishing one more goal, I have faith in the young law enforcement officers we’ve recruited, mentored, and promoted to take up the issues of the future. They are battle tested and ready.”

On Oct. 10, the CLEAT Executive Board selected Robert Leonard to assume the role of Executive Director upon Wilkison’s retirement. Leonard has been with the organization for 20 years, most recently serving as General Counsel, where he demonstrated exceptional leadership and a strong commitment to CLEAT’s mission. Leonard’s vision for the future of CLEAT includes continuing to advance the organization’s priorities while adapting to the ever-evolving needs of Texas law enforcement.

“I am more than honored to take on this new role,” he said. “I look forward to continue working with CLEAT’s members and staff to ensure that we continue pushing for rights, protections, well-deserved benefits, and unmatched legal coverage for Texas law enforcement officers. Together, we will continue to build on the foundational map of success that has been laid out for us.”

Both men describe their journey to CLEAT as improbable. Wilkison previously worked for 18 years in government and politics, serving in various roles for elected officials and campaigns. Prior to his tenure at CLEAT, Leonard served as a New York City Police Officer and as a New York Assistant District Attorney.

The entire CLEAT organization expresses its deepest gratitude to Wilkison for his years of service and leadership, and welcomes Leonard into his new role with confidence and excitement.

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