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RELEASE: Austin Police Association Chooses Less Pay, Benefits and Officers Over Prospect of Additional Oversight

AUSTIN, TX – On Thursday, February 16, the Austin Police Association (APA) announced that they wouldn't return to the bargaining table with the City of Austin. If they follow through on this threat, the APA will trigger the expiration of their current contract, and with it the loss of significant pay and benefits for their members. This could result in additional immediate retirements by some officers eligible for the considerably more generous Sick Leave Payout offered under the contract as compared to state law.

The APA's announcement followed Austin City Council's decision on Wednesday, February 15 to fire City Manager Spencer Cronk and pivot City staff to negotiate a 1-year contract extension in order to enable the implementation of either of the two police oversight measures on the May ballot. On Wednesday, City Council Members repeatedly expressed their desire to give police officers an immediate and appreciable raise along with their pay and benefits. However, faced with the prospect of additional oversight after the May election, the APA declared its intention to simply stop negotiating at all.

"The Austin City Council gave every indication they wanted to keep officers under contract, maintain police pay and benefits, prevent unnecessary retirements, and raise officer salaries more than the 4% they would've gained in the 1st year of 4-year contract the APA prefers," said Kathy Mitchell, Senior Advisor for Equity Action. "The APA choosing to stop negotiating and throw all of that away shows that they care far more about avoiding the citizen oversight this community demands than wages and benefits for their members or the number of officers on the force."

"The APA now threatens to instigate the very outcome they claimed just 2 days ago would lead to mass retirements, slower 9-1-1 response times and increased crime - all because they fear the prospect of facing more oversight," said Chris Harris, President of Equity Action. "If their predictions prove true, then they clearly don't care about the people in this community. If their predictions prove false, then their willingness to lie and fear-monger truly knows no bounds."

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