



Office of Commissioner
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Commissioner Alisa Simmons' Statement on the FY2026 Proposed Tax Rate

Budgets are moral documents: they illustrate what our priorities are. Do we prioritize seniors keeping the lights on, families receiving public health protection, and every citizen having access to the ballot box? Or do we prioritize political and campaign talking points at the expense of people's lives?

My absence from Commissioners Court today is not a political ploy: it is a legal and necessary act of conscience. It is a step to protect Tarrant County residents and defend our fundamental values of caring for our neighbors and ensuring basic human dignity. It is the only tool available to force adoption of a more responsible tax rate. Under Texas Local Government Code §81.006, a county tax cannot be levied unless at least four commissioners are present. With only three members in attendance, the Court is prevented from adopting the county judge's extreme proposal of .1862, a rate below even the No-New-Revenue rate of .1866.

For taxpayers, today's outcome ensures property owners still receive a tax cut without the county judge forcing an even deeper, more destructive rate.

The current tax rate (FY2025) of .1875 will automatically drop to the No-New-Revenue rate of .1866 for FY2026.

But let's be direct about what ***has already been done***. The county judge coerced the budget director into shaping this year's budget around his unreasonable, .1862, below No-New-Revenue rate demands. As a result, devastating cuts are already baked into the budget and will take effect October 1, 2025:

- The Human Services Department will be eliminated, ending more than 40 years of assistance for families in crisis, including rental assistance and the Senior Utility Assistance Program that keeps seniors' lights, cooling, and heating on.
- Critical public health positions will be cut, weakening our defenses against disease and stripping care from vulnerable populations.
- Election access will shrink, with 126 Early Voting and Election Day polling places eliminated.
- The mathematical sleight of hand which allows the Human Resources director to eliminate nearly 20 positions yet create nearly 20 positions didn't go unnoticed in this budget, while simultaneously reducing the staff sizes of the County Commissioners for Precincts 1 and 2.

This court's Republican majority also pushed to starve the Tarrant County Hospital District by forcing its tax rate well below the No-New-Revenue line.

Meanwhile, it is also disingenuous to claim that the \$3.5 million in returned bond funds from the county judge paid for the entirety of the county's 3% merit increase and 1% retiree cost-of-living adjustment. The math doesn't add up and the public deserves the truth from its leaders: honesty is a moral imperative in public service.

My record stands: I voted in favor of tax rates below No-New-Revenue rates since being on the Commissioners Court. In addition, I made the motion for the inaugural 10% Homestead Exemption. I support tax cuts that are honest and compassionate - that cut fat, not bone - and that protect both your pocketbook and your community.

The FY2026 No New Revenue rate is the responsible path forward. We can run a lean county government without hollowing out its heart.

I'm standing firm because this isn't about politics. It's about our soul as a community. I refuse to be complicit in cuts that sacrifice our values and abandon those who count on us most. My stance is about people. It is about protecting the vulnerable, preventing more homelessness, which keeps our jail population down, and ensuring that elderly residents can heat their homes when winter weather hits. It's preserving democracy and keeping Tarrant County strong.

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