

Dear Governor Abbott,

I am writing to you today to address a significant flaw in our criminal justice system—the Law of Parties. This law allows individuals to be convicted and sentenced to severe penalties, including the death penalty, for crimes they did not directly commit and may have had no intention of committing at all.

The Law of Parties allows for someone to be held responsible for a crime based on their association with individuals involved, regardless of their level of participation or intent. Under this law, someone who is present at the scene of a crime or connected to the individuals involved can be charged with the same crime as the person who actually commits the act—even if they played no active role in the violence. This results in injustices, where people are convicted and punished for crimes they did not commit or have no direct involvement in.

The Law of Parties fundamentally undermines the principle of individual responsibility. Justice should be based on intent—on whether someone deliberately and knowingly participated in a crime. However, this law blurs the line between those who actively engage in criminal activity and those who, by circumstance, may be wrongfully swept into a conviction.

One of the most concerning aspects of the Law of Parties is its potential to lead to severe and disproportionate sentences, including the death penalty, for individuals who did not directly contribute to the loss of life or the crime committed. It is not just about legal fairness; it is about human lives. The consequences of this law can be devastating, tearing apart families and devastating communities, all while delivering a punishment that may not fit the crime.

It is time for Texas to rethink the application of the Law of Parties. We must ensure that our legal system holds people accountable for their actions in a manner that is fair, just, and proportionate. No one should face life-altering consequences—let alone the death penalty—for actions they did not directly commit, or for situations where they may have had no intent to cause harm.

I urge you to take immediate steps to reform or repeal the Law of Parties, so that individual responsibility is accurately and fairly assessed. It is time to restore fairness in our legal system and prevent the wrongful conviction of those who are not guilty of committing violent acts. We owe it to the people of Texas to fix this deeply flawed law and to ensure that no one is wrongly punished for the actions of others.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to a more just and equitable legal system.

Sincerely,