

2017 DPS Peace Officer Memorial Service

Speech by Texas Governor Greg Abbott

**Note - The Governor may depart from prepared remarks.*

Thank you Chairman Mach and Director McCraw for your service to the State of Texas.

The law enforcement officers who protect our great state and the families who stand by their side deserve our deepest respect. We honor the memory of all law enforcement officers who have fallen in the long and proud history of the Department of Public Safety. We celebrate the dedication and commitment of these selfless servants. We pray for the families of the fallen.

We especially remember Trooper Bill Davidson. Rodney Neal who attended the Academy with Trooper Davidson had this to say about him:

“Trooper Davidson and I attended the Texas DPS Academy together in 1973. We both became Texas Highway Patrol Troopers and remained good friends. Bill was a class act while a recruit in the Academy and remained a top notch trooper in his assigned duty station. He was well known for his kindness and caring attitude. Bill never sought recognition or favor. He was the consummate Public Servant and wore the badge and the Stetson hat of the Texas Highway Patrol with the greatest of pride and integrity. Texas lost a great human being and a professional trooper while heaven gained one of its brightest stars. God bless his wife and children and give them comfort in knowing that Bill Davidson will always be a man to be patterned after and a trooper to be emulated.”

The true measure of each officer’s service is etched in the Bible: John 15:13 reminds us: greater love has no man than this: to lay down one’s life for another. Matthew 25 reminds us – well done my good and faithful servant. Whatever you did for the least of my brothers that you did for me.

To all DPS Officers, Troopers, Special Agents and Texas Rangers – those with us in person, those who remain with us in memory. You have the enduring gratitude of the people of Texas. You answer the call of duty and put your lives on the line to protect the people you serve. That is a special calling only the best can answer.

This has been a particularly tough year with cowardly criminals targeting law enforcement officers across the state. Unbelievably last year ambush-style killings of police increased by over 150 percent. We will never forget the sniper attack on Dallas Law Enforcement in July. Or other law enforcement officers around the state attacked because of the badge they wear. Disrespect for the men and women who wear the uniform is unacceptable.

Respect for our law enforcement officers must be restored in our nation. It is time for us to unite as Texans to say “no more.” No more will we tolerate disrespect for those who serve. No more will we allow hate merchants to tear us apart. I look forward to signing legislation that better

protects law enforcement officers and makes it a hate crime to target police officers simply because of the uniform they wear.

Texas is an exceptional state with exceptional people – people like law enforcement officers who are willing to step forward and serve.

Law enforcement officers restore our faith in the goodness of Texas and greatness of the United States of America. They show that in the end, goodness always prevails over evil.

As governor and on behalf of all the people of Texas, I thank all law enforcement for your sacrifice and service and for the goodness you bring to our state.

May God bless you and keep you safe. And may God forever bless the great State of Texas.