



**TEXAS BOARD
OF
PARDONS AND PAROLES**

Number: BPP-POL. 141.202

Date: April 16, 2015

Page: 1 of 3

**Supersedes: BPP-POL. 141.202
Dated October 4, 2013**

BOARD POLICY

SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENTS

PURPOSE: To establish a policy of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles regarding public comments.

AUTHORITY: Texas Government Code Section 508.036(b)(4)

DISCUSSION: The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (Board) shall provide access and opportunity for public comments on issues under the jurisdiction of the Board. The Board defines its areas of jurisdiction in Board Rule §141.3, Board Administration. A copy of the rule may be obtained from the Board's Central Office at 8610 Shoal Creek, Austin, Texas 78757 or on the Board's web site at www.tdcj.state.tx.us/bpp.

Persons not employed by or under contract with the Board who wish to have items placed on the Board's posted agenda shall follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Board to provide the public with a reasonable opportunity to appear before the Board and to speak on any issue under the jurisdiction of the Board, with the exception of an individual parole determination or clemency recommendation.

DEFINITIONS: Public Comments - comments made by the public on non-posted Board agenda topics.

PROCEDURE:

I. Public Comments

- A. Once a year at a regularly called Board meeting, the Board will afford the public an opportunity to present comments on subjects within the Board's jurisdiction that are not on the posted agenda.
- B. Persons who desire to make public comments to the Board at these meetings shall provide, on the date of the meeting, a completed registration card to onsite Board staff at least ten (10) minutes prior to the meeting's posted start time. Registration cards shall be made available at the entrance to the room where the Board's meeting is scheduled to be held.

- C. The Presiding Officer shall have discretion in setting reasonable limits on the time allocated for public comments. If several persons have registered to address the Board on the same topic, it shall be within the discretion of the Presiding Officer to request that those persons select a representative amongst themselves to express such comments, or limit their comments to an expression of support for views previously articulated.
 - D. The Presiding Officer shall have discretion in setting reasonable limits on the time allocated for public comments. If several persons have registered to address the Board on the same topic, it shall be within the discretion of the Presiding Officer to request that those persons select a representative amongst themselves to express such comments, or limit their comments to an expression of support for views previously articulated.
 - E. Public comments shall be heard prior to the conclusion of the Board meeting, with deviation from this practice within the Presiding Officer's discretion. If a person who is registered to speak on a non-posted topic is not present when called upon, that person shall be called once more following all other registered speakers. If that person is not present at that time, their opportunity to speak at that meeting shall be forfeited.
 - F. Public comments presenters may submit related documentation (a minimum of 20 copies) to the Board Central office staff no later than three (3) calendar days prior to the posted meeting date when the comments are to occur. Such documentation shall be distributed to the Board at the meeting. Any documentation submitted after the above-referenced date will not be distributed to the Board until after the comments. Distribution will occur only if the required minimum of 20 copies is provided to the Board staff.
 - G. After the Board meeting, the presenter will receive letter from the Board acknowledging their presentation.
- II. Disability Accommodations
- A. Persons with disabilities who have special communication or accommodation needs and who plan to attend a meeting may contact the Board Central Office at (512) 406-5452. Requests for accommodation shall be made at least two (2) business days prior to a posted meeting.
 - B. The Board shall make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs. The Board Central Office staff will contact the requestor to provide specific information concerning the accommodation.
- III. Conduct and Decorum - The Board shall receive public comments as authorized by this policy, subject to the following additional guidelines:
- A. Comments shall remain pertinent to the issues denoted on the registration cards;

- B. A presenter who is determined by the Presiding Officer to be disrupting a meeting shall immediately cease the disruptive activity or leave the meeting room if ordered to do so by the Presiding Officer; and
- C. A presenter may not assign a portion of his or her allotted presentation time to another speaker.

ADOPTED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF THE BOARD ON THE 16th DAY OF APRIL, 2015.

RISSIE OWENS, PRESIDING OFFICER (CHAIR)

** Signature on file.*