



**TEXAS BOARD  
OF  
PARDONS AND PAROLES**

**Number: BPP-POL. 141.202**

**Date: April 15, 2021**

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**Supersedes: May 21, 2020**

## **BOARD POLICY**

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**SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

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

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

**POLICY:** It is the policy of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (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.

**DISCUSSION:** The 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 Section 141.3, Board Administration. A copy of the rule may be obtained from the Board Central Office at 8610 Shoal Creek Blvd., Austin, Texas 78757, or on the Board's website at [www.tdcj.texas.gov/bpp](http://www.tdcj.texas.gov/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.

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

Public Presentation – presentations made by the public to the Board regarding topics posted on a Board meeting agenda that has been filed with and published by the *Texas Register*.

**PROCEDURE:**

I. Public Comments

- A. Once per year at a regularly called Board meeting, the Presiding Officer or 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 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 meeting is scheduled to be held.
- C. The Presiding Officer (Chair) 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 Chair's discretion 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. Public comments shall be heard prior to the conclusion of the Board meeting, with deviation from this practice within the Chair'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 the meeting shall be forfeited.
- E. Public comments presenters may submit related documentation (a minimum of 10 copies) to 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 10 copies is provided to Board staff.
- F. After the Board meeting, the presenter will receive a letter from the Board acknowledging their comments.

## II. Public Presentation

- A. Persons who desire to make a public presentation to the Board on a posted agenda topic shall provide, on the date of the meeting, a completed registration card to onsite Board staff at least 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.
- B. The Chair 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 Chair 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.
- C. The Chair shall provide an opportunity for public presentations to occur prior to the Board taking action on the topic denoted on the presenter's registration card. If a person who is registered to speak on a posted agenda item is not present when called upon, that person's opportunity to speak prior to the action being taken on that topic shall be forfeited.

- D. Presenters may submit related documentation (a minimum of 10 copies) to 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 presentation. Distribution will occur only if the required minimum of 10 copies is provided to the Board staff.
- III. 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. Board Central Office staff will contact the requestor to provide specific information concerning the accommodation.
- IV. Conduct and Decorum – The Board shall receive public comments as authorized by this policy, subject to the following additional guidelines:
- A. Comments and presentations shall remain pertinent to the issues denoted on the registration cards;
  - B. A presenter who is determined by the Chair to be disrupting a meeting shall immediately cease the disruptive activity or leave the meeting room if ordered to do so by the Chair; 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 15<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2021.**

**DAVID GUTIÉRREZ, PRESIDING OFFICER (CHAIR)**

*\*Signature on file.*