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For Immediate Release

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Travis County District Attorney Ronald Earle today released the following statement:

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals today heard oral argument regarding the conspiracy charges against James Ellis, John Colyandro and Tom DeLay.

The consequences of the position taken by these defendants have significance for Texas that are far beyond their individual fates and the charges they face. It is important that Texans understand those consequences.

Every family in Texas is concerned about conspiracies that involve the use of firearms in our schools and imperil the safety of our children.

Texans want to protect the elderly from conspiracies that result in overcharging by insurance companies at the expense of families.

Texans want to protect the safety of their drinking water against conspiracies that would endanger their safety in the interest of profit.

Texans want to be protected against conspiracies that allow criminals to enter Texas illegally for dangerous purposes.

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Texans want to be protected against conspiracies to pollute our public waterways, rivers, wetlands, parks, and other natural resources.

The legal position of the defendants in this case would interpret the conspiracy statute in a way that will deprive Texans of these long-standing protections as well as others.

It would strip away the traditional and long-standing legal authority of all Texas law enforcement officers and agencies to investigate, apprehend, and bring to justice those who plan, design, coordinate, and carry out a wide variety of schemes to take advantage of, exploit, steal from, and abuse our citizens.

Texas families, children, schools, healthcare facilities, working Texans, and elderly citizens of our State would be put at risk in too many ways to list here today. The position taken by the defendants would leave Texans unprotected from conspiracies against them.