



# CITY OF HOUSTON NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNCIL MEMBER PETER BROWN

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## **Council Member Peter Brown's Statement on Fighting to Preserve Public Safety Spending**

**August 31, 2009** - While I think the City's Finance Department may be premature in reducing the Fiscal Year 2010 sales tax revenues projections at this time – given that we don't have any data yet for this year – I do believe the Mayor is trying to prudently manage the budget, and I support him in that.

However, what I cannot support is across-the-board budget cuts in every department. This would indicate that all departments have the same priority, and to me they do not. For me, and most Houstonians as well, public safety is our number one priority and I do not support cuts to the Police and Fire budgets at this time.

We are too early into the fiscal year to begin reductions in our highest priority area of public safety. When we do receive sales tax and other data for the current year, we may have to look again at the public safety budgets, but I do not support reducing them at this time. We cannot risk the public's safety; we cannot risk an increase in crime.

I encourage the Mayor and his department directors to increase their efforts to find efficiencies, reduce waste and economize where they can. I know with the Mayor's strong oversight, significant efficiencies and savings can be found. Also, I believe the City needs to redouble its efforts to recruit new businesses to Houston and to support the businesses we already have. One way to fight declining sales tax and other revenues is to proactively grow the economy and expand the tax base. We need to do this now more than ever.

In closing, let me add that any discussion of furloughing employees is premature and will unnecessarily cause morale problems among our employees. We are far from needing to take such action.

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