DPS Memos Outline Trooper Arrest Quota

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It's not a rumor anymore.

KXAN Austin News obtained copies of Department of Public Safety interoffice memos requiring state troopers to make arrest quotas.

If troopers failed to reach the requirement, they could face punishment.

A memo sent Dec. 4 reads, "All troopers assigned to Highway Patrol/Vehicle Inspections Houston are required to have a bare minimum of at least one DWI arrest by December 31, 2007. Beginning Jan. 1, 2008, you [troopers] will be required to have at least four DWI arrest for 2008."

The memo goes on to say, "Failure to meet either goal will result in a negative impact on your year end evaluation."

A memo sent Nov. 19 and 20 regarding criminal charges reads, "Troopers are expected to file at least two charges per week."

State Rep. Garnet Coleman said he is surprised and disappointed by the memos.

"When it specifically says you should have four DWI arrests within a month's time, that is a quota, and you'll be penalized if you do not, that is a quota," Coleman said.

"I don't think it's fair to the troopers," said Austin resident Joan Clucas. "They may not see anyone driving drunk in a day."

"I know state troopers in Vermont, and I have heard them talk about that before how they like to work certain shifts and certain times, because it is a lot easier for them to hit their quota," said Austin resident Molly Greaves.

DPS responded in a written statement: "The Department of Public Safety does not support using specific numbers to communicate work goals for commissioned personnel." The agency said in a separate statement: "We will take immediate steps to provide clarification to eliminate any misunderstanding."

Coleman said if DPS does not do something to correct the issue, he will propose a bill to make sure the agency does not use quotas.

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