

## County treasurer blasts pay raise plan

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Harris County Treasurer Don Summers called on Commissioners Court on Tuesday to abandon plans to give pay raises — some as large as 24 percent — to upper-level county officials.

Summers, who has already acquired an unusual level of unpopularity with members of Commissioners Court, called the raises “underhanded” and said they were “exactly why term limits are so popular with the people.”

Summers' proposal is in response



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to the court's plan to grant raises to 160 judges and county officials in September. The largest of those raises — 24 percent — will go to the

commissioners themselves, boosting their annual pay to \$115,995. The court will vote on the raises after hearing from the public on March 3.

One of the main reasons Summers said he objected to the raises is that the 13,000 rank-and-file county employees have not received substantial raises in several years. Others noted that Summers is running a re-election campaign, and opposing pay raises for politicians is unlikely to damage his support.

Summers, who would receive an 11 percent raise under the plan, proposed that court members delay the raises until they study how best to increase pay for all employees.

Calling the raises “a violation of the public trust,” Summers said, “Think of the message your current plan sends to all of the other 13,000 employees.”

County Judge Robert Eckels said after court Tuesday that he still supported the raises as a way to ensure the county can attract and keep competent employees and department heads, instead of losing them to the private sector.

He disputed Summers' contention that the plan would allow the court to give future raises without public knowledge, noting that the county is required to post many of the raises before granting them.