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## TEXAS COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER STANDARDS AND EDUCATION

COMMENT ON OUR PROFESSION

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### Know Your Limits

I went fishing not long ago. It was a calm and pleasant day. The water was like glass and the fish were jumping everywhere, but not biting what I was offering. I still thought that it was a good day, though, because even a bad day of fishing is better than a good day of lawn care.

My persistence paid off later that evening and I started catching some pretty good sized crappies. Every once in a while, I'd catch a fish that didn't quite measure up to the size limit, and I'd throw it back. As I reflected on my day, I thought about the significance of throwing some back.

My thoughts came quickly as I realized that we all need to "throw things back," just as I had thrown back some undersized fish. As people in public service, we go around collecting people's worries and concerns that are thrown to us. Many times we catch these worries and concerns of others and take them on as personal burdens and problems to be solved. Some of us take on more than our share, or even more than we can seriously handle. Our intentions are good, but our ambitions overload our ability to accomplish our goals.

While cleaning my fish, I thought of Maya Angelou when she said, "You shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw some things back." Maya advises us to keep one hand free to reject the excessive burdens and stresses that we take on as our own.

We all need to calculate just how many burdens we are going to take on. I suggest that we should pick carefully and throw some back. I threw some fish back, and the next time I feel like people are overloading me - or more realistically I'm overloading myself - I think I'm going to just "throw some back." I know I'll do a better job with the ones I take on if I just throw some back.

Just like in fishing, we need to know our limits in daily life, and in the future I'm going to work to stay within those limits.