

July 11, 2016

Law Enforcement Unions Condemn Violent Protest & Divisive Rhetoric

Saint Paul, MN – The following is a statement from Jake Ayers, President, Law Enforcement Labor Services; Joe Dellwo, President, Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association; Lt. Bob Kroll, President, Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis; and Dave Titus, President, Saint Paul Police Officers Federation.

"While our communities and the nation continue to deal with the tragic events of the past several days, members of Minnesota's law enforcement community will continue to protect the rights of individuals and groups to express themselves through lawful, peaceful protests and demonstrations.

The safety of the public and our own officers remains the top priority.

There is a time and place for lawful protest. Law enforcement officers throughout the state stand ready to protect all those who desire to express their grief, their anger, and their desire for change in a lawful manner. But unlawful actions, like marching on an interstate, put police officers and the general public in harm's way. These dangerous settings, fueled by unrest and uncertainty create an opportunity for those who wish to do harm. Officers will continue to show restraint and discretion, but laws designed to keep people safe will continue to be enforced.

As law enforcement officers dedicated to providing professional, impartial, and unequivocal public service, we are alarmed and disheartened with Governor Dayton's recent statements. All Americans are entitled to due process, including officers who are involved in critical incidents that lead to loss of life. The governor's comments cast judgment on law enforcement and deepen mistrust between officers and the communities they serve. His remarks concerning Philando Castile's race as the motive for a traffic stop were premature at best, and as the violence of Saturday's unlawful protest on I-94 demonstrates, reckless at worst.

During a time of heightened emotion, our leaders must demonstrate a calm reassurance that unites and builds trust in our collective ability to overcome difficult times. That is not what we heard from Governor Dayton. Instead, his rhetoric further fueled feelings of division and anger at the end of what became an unlawful protest resulting in injuries to 21 police officers Saturday night. The State of Minnesota deserves better.

We respectfully request Governor Dayton retract his inflammatory statements, apologize to Minnesota's law enforcement officers, and stand with us in denouncing illegal and violent protests that place police officers and the public at risk. Additionally, we expect full recovery to those officers who were assaulted and prosecution to the fullest of the offenders."

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