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Attachments:  image002.png  image001.jpg

This past Monday, WPPA Executive Director Jim Palmer put out a statement regarding the Kenosha Officer Involved Shooting. Many of our WPPA members were not pleased with all of the statement. We made Jim Palmer aware of the complaints us agents were receiving from some of our members. He gave us this follow up response to put into context the reasons the statement was written the way it was (See below). This is for information only. Please share with your members. Have a great weekend.

Hart

On Monday, the WPPA released a statement regarding the shooting that occurred in Kenosha the day before. Since that time, I have received a wide variety of responses to the statement from members of the WPPA and the general public that have been both positive and negative in nature. There have been those in law enforcement that indicated their support for it, and those that expressed a contrary view. The same is true of the reactions from law enforcement's critics, as well as those that are decidedly anti-police.

In light of the fact that WPPA members are among those that contacted us to indicate their disapproval of the statement, I wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with some additional context behind it. You are free to share these details with whomever you deem appropriate, and you are always welcome to suggest that any members contact me directly as well, and I will respond to them accordingly.

The concerns that have been brought to our attention appear to fall into one or more of the following categories: (1) that the statement somehow threw Kenosha's officers and/or the union under the bus, (2) that the statement didn't do enough to defend the officers involved, (3) that we somehow prejudged the incident, and (4) that we didn't confront more forcefully the inflammatory statements made by Gov. Evers. To the extent that other concerns are raised to you, I encourage you to share those with me as well.

Shortly after the incident occurred on Sunday, the local police union in Kenosha reached out to us (WPPA). Recognizing the fact that the WPPA has the ability to reach a broader audience, the local union asked if we would put out a statement that was consistent with their own. We reviewed their statement without suggesting any revisions and even told him what a statement would say. The statement that we put out attempted to empathize with those that are troubled for one reason or another by the video that was taken of the incident, while at the same time it urged the public to allow the independent investigative process to run its course before rendering judgment. The statement that we released also urged the public not to paint all of law enforcement with a broad brush, and highlighted the fact that Gov. Evers had done so. (On this point, we also shared our frustrations over Gov. Evers' statements in a lengthy call with his staff on Monday, and we have elaborated on this further in a

number of interviews, including this WPR radio interview.) Lastly, the WPPA statement also addressed the developments that also occurred on Monday in which Gov. Evers and Assembly Speaker Rep. Vos called for differing strategies as to how lawmakers might consider reform measures related to policing and criminal justice.

In short, the local police union asked us to issue a statement to reinforce their own, they knew what we were going to say, and we have maintained regular contact with them since the statement was issued. By no means should this response be interpreted as any kind of dismissal of the concerns that have been expressed. The environment facing law enforcement today is unprecedented, and these are emotional issues for many officers - as they should be. As always, we attempt to approach these controversial issues with a strategic view that bears the strongest potential to protect the law enforcement profession and the WPPA as the state's largest law enforcement group in the long term. To the extent that we can continue to serve as an empathetic and informed voice of reason, I believe that kind of advocacy protects the state's law enforcement community in the long run. That said, I am also very well aware how this type of response does little to satisfy the needs of those who are desperate for a strong pushback during these trying times for the dedicated men and women working to keep our communities safe. Trying to strike a delicate balance on all of this, as I have attempted to do, isn't likely to accomplish that, but it also isn't likely to incite further blowback against the officers in this state or impair the WPPA's ability to be seen as a credible authority figure on these topics - which serves to protect Wisconsin's officers in the long term.

I respect the views of anyone that disagrees with that assessment, and I encourage anyone who wants to share that with me to do so.

Thank you again for all that you are doing to protect our members and the law enforcement profession. This is an unprecedented time, and I appreciate all of you for what you do to serve our law enforcement community.

Stay safe.

Jim Palmer

Executive Director

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