



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

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The Honorable Kym L. Worthy
Prosecuting Attorney
County of Wayne
Frank Murphy Hall of Justice
1441 St. Antoine Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Ms. Worthy:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), we write to you to express our extreme concern and disappointment with your decision not to criminally charge three individuals who posted grave threats against police officers on social media.

NAPO is a coalition of police unions and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action, and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 1,000 police units and associations, including the Detroit Police Officers Association, the Detroit Police Lieutenants and Sergeants Association, and the Detroit Police Command Officers Association, 241,000 sworn law enforcement officers, and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.

Detroit police officers investigated credible threats against police made by three separate individuals on three different occasions. One individual stated on social media that "[a]ll lives can't matter unless black lives matter. Kill all white cops." He also stated that "[i]t's time to wage war and shoot the police first". Another stated that the Dallas shooter was his hero and inspiration. These threats are not statements protected under the First Amendment. They are statements that are meant as intimidation and are credible threats of violence against a unit of government.

Officers investigating these threats communicated frequently with prosecutors throughout the investigations and at no point were they told that there were any problems with their investigation. It was only with the August 30, 2016 press release from your office that the investigators found out there were issues with the cases they had built against the three suspects. There is something seriously wrong with the fact that your office would not work collaboratively with the police department to build the strongest case possible against these individuals who violently threatened the lives of police officers.

These are highly trained officers who followed the rule of law in arresting and interviewing the suspects only to have their cases turned down for prosecution by you on minor technicalities. Your attempt to blame the police for not being able to criminally charge these individuals is inexcusable.

In recent weeks, prosecutors in Norwalk, Connecticut, Racine, Wisconsin, New Hartford, New York, Dallas, Texas, and in other Michigan jurisdictions have charged people for making threats against law enforcement on social media. United States Attorney General Loretta Lynch has stated that the Department of Justice is committed to and has already brought federal cases against those who make threats against law enforcement officers and that she encourages state prosecutors to do the same. The Attorney General recognizes the importance of taking these threats seriously in order to protect our police officers and the people they serve.

It is a slap in the face of law enforcement that your office decided not to collaborate with the police investigations, which would have given officers the greatest chance of ensuring these individuals get criminally charged for their threats of violence. This seems to be just another example of your office not standing up for and defending the police officers who put their lives on the line each day to keep Wayne County's communities safe.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), on average, one law enforcement officer is killed in the line of duty somewhere in the United States every 61 hours. Moreover, preliminary data from the NLEOMF indicates a 52 percent increase in the number of officer firearm-related fatalities from August 2015 to August 2016. The Dallas shooter who killed five police officers and the Baton Rouge shooter who killed three officers both posted threats to law enforcement on social media prior to the attacks. In the wake of these killings, it is indefensible that your office would not take these social media threats seriously.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at our Alexandria, Virginia office at (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,



Michael McHale
President



William J. Johnson, Esq., CAE
Executive Director