



Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #86

May 23, 2018

Good afternoon. My name is Rick Snyder and I am the President of the Indianapolis Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #86. Today we want to take the opportunity to outline several actions the Fraternal Order of Police is taking following the tragic events of this past summer and the subsequent decision of the Indianapolis Police Merit Board in re-instating the officers involved.

First let me say, this has been a tragedy for everyone involved. We extend our prayers and condolences to all those affected.

We all understand and appreciate the public's concern whenever officers are faced with the difficult, split second decision to defend themselves and others against a potentially armed suspect.

We also understand how important this event is to the collective conscience of our community. That is why it was being presented to a Police Merit Board made up of citizens of this community, all from diverse backgrounds. These citizens were able to examine all of the facts and determined the officers acted within policy. Their review and judgement was fair and impartial AND free of any political influence or inappropriate public pressure. That is the way the Merit Board system is designed and that is the way the Merit Board system should remain.

Politics has no role in Policing. An impartial fair review process made up of checks and balances is essential for police department disciplinary accountability. Otherwise, it opens the door for politically motivated decisions from elected officials to infect public safety practices that protect all of us.

Our country rightly worked for the past half century to move away from that style of policing. In fact, the current model for the Merit Board was a key issue in the

1960's as part of the civil rights movement, and the "Merit Board system" was one of the principal civil rights demands.

Unfortunately, what many in our community were told (AND were NOT told) over the past many months blinded them to the truth. We are collectively better than this.

That is why today our Indianapolis Fraternal Order of Police is announcing several Action Items and Recommendations to help our City move forward and begin the healing process.

One thing this incident and subsequent public dialogue has revealed is that we cannot continue to circulate around the same tired responses.

We cannot continue to point fingers at each other, blame the system, change the rules to rig politically expedient outcomes or ignore our fundamental mutual flaws.

Instead our City and all those who want to help make it better must Think Bigger.

We must come together with a shared objective focused on Education, Prevention and Community Collaboration. At some point, rather than tear each other down, we must answer the question of how do we stand together.

That is the value of the Community Conversations proposed by Council President, Vop Osili and his peers. These structured opportunities for dialogue and understanding provide a foundation for all of us to build upon and we pledge our participation. We all must play a role.

Therefore, today, the FOP and all the law enforcement professionals we represent are announcing the following actions and recommendations that we are going to take to help move our City forward.

First, the FOP is launching a Public Education and Prevention Awareness campaign that will focus on developing tangible video, audio and lesson plans to better educate the public to ensure the safety of everyone during police and citizen interactions.



Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #86

One thing this tragedy and the subsequent public discussion revealed is the need to better understand “the Do’s and the Don’ts” during police encounters.

Our Police Officers are human, and they have legitimate safety concerns when engaging in their lawful roles during intervention activities such as traffic stops, responding to crimes in progress, investigating potential criminal activity and securing the scenes of incidents so that they can not only protect themselves, but also the innocent victims involved and offenders alike.

Therefore, the FOP will lead the effort of partnering with local leaders, nationally recognized law enforcement instructors, civil rights advocates and members of the community to professionally produce video education materials, Public Service Announcement segments and enhanced youth education and crime prevention lesson plans to help better educate the public of law enforcement practices and increase the opportunities to prevent future tragic outcomes during police encounters.

Again, we must #ThinkBigger and collectively lead with actions versus simple words. Therefore, the Indianapolis Fraternal Order of Police is publicly pledging to immediately contribute up to \$25,000 to launch such an initiative.

Second, in the last several days, the FOP has taken assertive actions to work with elected officials and policy makers to explore the necessary steps to introduce a Bill in the next Indiana legislative session requiring the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to incorporate such training and testing on safe practices during encounters with law enforcement on traffic stops, vehicle crashes, high risk interventions and active incidents. The objective is to ensure a proper understanding of the role of citizens in police engagement to ensure everyone departs from the encounter safely. We are hopeful the Indiana Legislature and our Governor will move quickly on this effort and successfully enact such legislation and administrative rules.

Additionally, the FOP has already launched proactive discussions with law enforcement professionals and civil rights advocates around our country. We have engaged the leadership of our National Fraternal Order of Police and its membership of 350,000 law enforcement professionals. We have also engaged in dialogue with the Civil Rights Advocate Reverend Markel Hutchins from Atlanta, GA and are constructing a partnership in the nationally recognized “One Cop Initiative” which brings faith congregations in concert to support law enforcement officers and police efforts.

Next, we call upon our educators to join us in developing lesson plans to incorporate such safety guidelines into school curriculum especially focusing on high school aged students who are beginning their drivers training and who also begin to have increased exposure to police activities in public without adult supervision. Our schools, teachers and administrators must play a vital role in this effort.

Finally, we also call upon leaders of our Faith Based communities to join us and leverage the Power of the Pulpit to convey messages of Education of every citizen’s rights as well as their obligations in Preventing unnecessary and senseless tragedies as the result of unsafe actions and responses during any encounters with law enforcement officers.

Our overall theme for these various collaborative discussions and educational opportunities must focus on the mantra of “Comply Now/Complain Later.”

Our law enforcement community will also lead the effort to better educate members of the public of their constitutional rights to due process and the proscribed steps for filing complaints anytime there is a concern of misconduct by the police. The rule of law must be followed by police and citizen alike. This is imperative to ensure order within our communities and the safety of everyone.

President Ronald Reagan once said, “the great capacity of our nation is to admit the sins of our past and make changes to right our past wrongs.”

It is important that members of our community know that we recognize the rightful concerns over police practices during the past half-century. It is also



Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #86

important for all of us recognize the substantial steps that have been taken over the decades to improve the law enforcement profession while also building trust and respect between the police and the community.

Today is another step of moving forward.

We are confident; these tangible steps will help move our city forward in a proactive and positive manner. But it cannot be done by One Group or One Agency.

It will take every neighborhood, every church, every civic group, every business leader, every elected official, every teacher, every pastor, every citizen and every law enforcement officer to #ThinkBigger than our current situation and to truly be the light in the darkness. If we can't do it at the neighborhood level, we will not be able to do it as a City.

So we call upon all those involved and all those observing from the sidelines to Join Us in this effort. We challenge others in our business and non-profit community to also financially contribute to this effort and pledge their support to #ThinkBigger