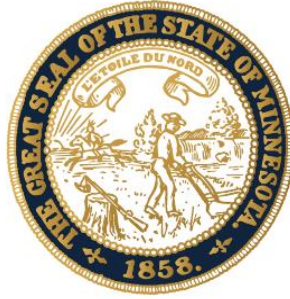


Jim Nash
State Representative

District 47A
Carver County



Minnesota
House of
Representatives

August 27, 2020

Law Enforcement Needs Our Support, and Respect.

On Wednesday, I spent the afternoon on a Minneapolis Police ride along. Several officers remarked I was the first state-level politician to go on a ride along in quite some time. But I have done this in my local community and wanted to see how the experience would differ in Minneapolis. The answer was a lot.

One of the first events of the day was attending a roll call and what I saw was both heartening and troubling.

I saw public servants who were dedicated to the job of protecting the people of Minneapolis. These men and women rush towards danger to keep us safe – every one of us regardless of race, gender, or religion.

I saw a group of men and women who want to work to make sure policing is done right. They want to weed out the misdeeds and show how great of a city and police force Minnesota can produce.

But I also saw folks being beaten down by the endless onslaught of negativity they have faced. Morale was poor and the reports of hundreds of officers looking to leave is not hard to believe. The lack of support from the very top has taken a toll.

Throughout the day, I also saw the lack of respect and outright derision shown to the very people charged with keeping the residents of Minneapolis safe. It was jarring to see and hear some of the language and gestures thrown at officers on patrol.

The Minneapolis Police have been showing up to do a tough job without the support of their elected leaders. From the Mayor of Minneapolis' lack of leadership to the city council calling to defund, abolish, and otherwise eliminate the police, and House Democrats remaining silent or lending support to voices in their ranks propping up these ideas – it has got to stop.

This lack of support has filtered down to the citizenry and demoralized the police.

The failure earlier this summer to combat the rioting and looting encouraged the escalating and senseless violence we saw Wednesday night – including one officer being seriously injured – all because of false rumors on social media.

I was on the ride along when the murder suspect took his own life on the Nicollet Mall. The officers called to the scene acted professionally and, despite video evidence immediately being released showing the suicide in graphic detail, bad actors used this to incite riots and looting of nearby businesses that continued until late in the night.

The call to that incident ended my ride along. I left and drove home to Waconia – but the officers did not have that luxury. Instead, they were out until all hours of the night trying to quell the rampant lawlessness.

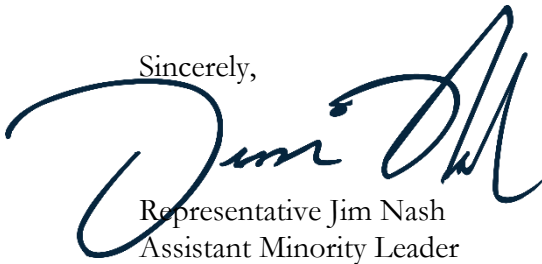
I am grateful for the law enforcement and first responders who were able to quickly restore order and stop further destruction on Wednesday night but we need to stop jumping to the conclusion that law enforcement acted badly.

We need to demand better from our elected leaders. Their lack of respect for our law enforcement professionals has eroded the respect for the rule of law and we are all witnessing the repercussions. A proven false rumor ignited another wave of looting and rioting. This cannot continue.

The vast, vast majority of law enforcement officers are like the men and women I spent yesterday with – they are the ones who rush towards danger to protect the life, liberty, and property of the rest of us, they want to see policing done right, and they want to be respected by their elected leaders.

When you see your local police drive by, give them a wave. If you see one walking on patrol, give them a smile and a hello. They have got a tough job, especially right now, and those warm interactions can help make a difference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Nash", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

Representative Jim Nash
Assistant Minority Leader