



MINNESOTA POLICE AND PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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August 2, 2021

Dear Bloomington Mayor and City Councilmembers: (via email at councilsecretary@bloomingtonmn.gov; tbusse@BloomingtonMN.gov; dlowman@BloomingtonMN.gov; snelson@bloomingtonmn.gov; jbaloaga@BloomingtonMN.gov; pmartin@bloomingtonmn.gov; jcarter@bloomingtonmn.gov; ncoulter@bloomingtonmn.gov)

The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA) represents Minnesota's 10,000+ public safety officials who hold active law enforcement licenses in the state of Minnesota. Members include police officers, correctional officers, dispatchers, and firefighters. MPPOA is the largest association representing public safety professionals in the State of Minnesota.

We recently learned the City of Bloomington's Human Rights Commissioner, Anita Smithson, called a Bloomington Back the Blue Rally "fascist radicalization," among other disparaging comments on police officers. **At best, the comments are grossly inappropriate for a city leader charged with defending rights of Bloomington residents. At worst, the comments are appalling, divisive, and bring suspicion to the Human Rights department among residents who deserve qualified staff. We believe Ms. Smithson's comments require a response and potentially further action from the city and its elected leaders to repair the damage caused by her comments.**

A few months ago, [a statewide poll was released](#) showing the vast majority (85%) of Minnesotans trust law enforcement. Minnesota's law enforcement officers share the goal of safer communities for all and play an essential role in that effort. Those who seek to dismantle, defund, and demonize law enforcement are sadly out of touch with Minnesotans who overwhelmingly trust and rely on law enforcement.

"Back the Blue" events are incredibly common throughout the state and nation and show support for the community's law enforcement officers - who are city and/or county staff members themselves. The recent Bloomington event was well-attended by the community and law enforcement officers and their families. The event raised \$1380 for Bloomington Police Department Officer Matt Ryan as he undergoes chemotherapy after a re-diagnosis of Leukemia. This proud tradition of giving back also includes the Bloomington Police Department's annual Toys for Tots, among others.

In closing, demonization by some community leaders has severe and negative public safety consequences. If there are not enough quality candidates that want to be in the profession, or departments are defunded, we will see less help for community safety needs. Fewer law enforcement officers mean longer response times for urgent needs, less time for community engagement, and a reduced presence to deter those wishing to cause harm and mayhem. The failure to fully staff and field law enforcement personnel will deny justice to victims of crime. Instead of starving our system of public safety we need to build on our infrastructure of justice.

Sincerely,

Brian Peters, Executive Director
Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association