

From: [MPPOA Media](#)
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Subject: STATEMENT: Minnesota's police association and local police union on shooting of three law enforcement officers in Pope County, and death of Pope Co. Deputy Joshua Owen
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16, 2023

STATEMENT: Minnesota's police association and local police union on shooting of three law enforcement officers in Pope County, and death of Pope Co. Deputy Joshua Owen

(St. Paul, Minn.) – Two Pope County Sheriff deputies and a Starbuck Police Department officer were wounded by gunfire while making a domestic assault arrest. Pope County Deputy Joshua Owen died from his injuries.

Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association Executive Director Brian Peters said, **“God bless Deputy Owen, the additional wounded and responding officers, the local departments, and every police officer who dedicates their days to keeping us safe. Our law enforcement family is deeply saddened by the heartbreaking loss of Deputy Owen, and for the families of the three officers.**

This killing is a senseless act of violence and hate towards police officers who put everything on the line to serve and protect our communities. It shows the dangers of the job that police do every day, and how what could be considered a ‘normal’ day could turn into their last day. This will have a disturbing impact on recruitment, retention, and the mental health and well-being of law enforcement and other emergency first responders.”

Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS) Executive Director Jim Mortenson said, **“The sacrifices police officers make every day to protect and serve their communities are both large and small. Today’s injuries and death to these officers illustrates the increased and grave danger posed to law enforcement and communities. Our thoughts and prayers are with the**

responding officers for answering the call in the face of danger and putting their lives on the line to help victims of crime and to keep the public safe. We mourn alongside the Pope County Sheriff's Office, Starbuck Police Department, and their communities." LELS represents both the Pope County Sheriff's Office and Starbuck Police Department rank and file officers that were involved in this incident.

MPPOA General Counsel Imran Ali said, **"The violent assault on law enforcement continues now in Minnesota. After two police officers lost their life in Wisconsin, less than a week later we are mourning a loss of another in our own state. While the women and men are serving our communities, violent criminals are taking advantage of the division in our country. We must unite as a state, political party aside, and condemn this growing trend of violence towards law enforcement that has become too common."**

A week ago, two police officers were killed in the line of duty by a suspect in Wisconsin. [They were laid to rest yesterday.](#)

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The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA) is the largest association representing public safety professionals in the state.

Law Enforcement Labor Services (LELS) is Minnesota's largest public safety labor union (7,000+ members) specializing in representing law enforcement, fire, dispatch, corrections, and public safety support staff throughout the state.

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