PROFOUND SADNESS AND RAGE
LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ARE OUTRAGED

MEDIA RELEASE

Yesterday a student from Philipsburg Osceola showed an image of himself reenacting the murder of George Floyd. He captioned the post as “I can still breathe. I’m not dead, something is off here.” The post was baldly offensive, mocking the murder of a fellow human being.

It is important that people in Centre County know that their police chiefs, law enforcement leaders and officers are appalled by the actions and inactions of the officers involved. What occurred to George Floyd has no place or justification in a civilized society and cannot be allowed to stand.

I attach the public statements made by Centre County law enforcement and their leaders as a direct response to the post yesterday so that perhaps the individuals responsible for it understand how law enforcement view the matter. There is nothing to debate regarding George Floyd’s death. It was criminal and inhumane.

“There are longstanding issues in our criminal justice system that must change,” said District Attorney Bernie Cantorna. “They are a reflection of the racial divide and inequities in our society that continue to exist and divide us. For my part, I will continue to work so that our legal system treats everyone fairly, regardless of their race, gender, religion or any other identifying characteristics. If our legal system is to function, it must protect the vulnerable, seek justice, and work to address the underlying issues that cause crime. I support the protestors seeking change in how we police, and the racial and economic inequities that continue to divide us.”
June 3, 2020

"You can apologize over and over, but if your actions do not change, the words become meaningless"

Our country finds itself in the midst of social unrest, fueled by a hideous crime against all that I have pledged an oath to protect—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. No matter color, gender, creed or anything else that one can identify as, we in law enforcement took the same exact oath. Our oath in its most simple form is to protect those who cannot protect themselves, to preserve peace and to ensure that all are safe from harm.

I am sickened and angered by the police officers responsible for killing George Floyd. The oaths that every police officer takes, our dreams to make a difference, our hard work, our training, all were degraded to nothing, as we watched in disbelief the loss of life under the knee of a police officer. To further add insanity to this atrocity, fellow officers stood by and did nothing to save that life.

We have much work to do in this Country. Saying we are sorry is not enough anymore. Our good intentions, deeds and training mean nothing if we don’t protect our fellow citizens. I as well as your Police Department, are committed to treating ALL people with respect, dignity, and fairness. We have and will continue to build positive relationships with our citizens. We also will begin an attempt to rebuild the public’s trust in law enforcement that has been rightfully severed by the recent deplorable actions of a few.

I can say with absolute certainty that The Good Police Officers of this Nation are also sickened. We too have seen all that we can endure of these types of actions. Those Police officers are the ones that I am proud to be a part of. They do stand alongside the good people of this Country who demand that changes are necessary to evolve our society into one in which we ALL are truly considered equal.

Shawn P. Weaver, Chief of Police

Bellefonte Borough Police Department
Statement from Sheriff Bryan Sampsel

The officers involved in the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota has no place in law enforcement. The actions of the officers were in direct conflict with the ethics, values and sworn duty of every Law Enforcement Officer in this country. This kind of disturbing behavior has a rippling effect on every Law Enforcement Officer in the country and the trust of the citizens in which they serve.

We are to protect and serve the communities in which we serve. The officers involved in the tragedy failed to uphold their oath. While watching the video, I was angry and saddened at the officer’s behavior for human life. I know everyone that I spoke with who has watched the video was appalled by the actions of the officers involved in the death of Mr. Floyd. I believe most Law Enforcement Officers take the job they have to serve, protect and give back in some way to the communities they live in to make them better.

The actions of those officers do not represent the ethics, training, policies and practices of the Centre County Sheriff’s Office. Our Office will continue to serve the community and work to maintain the trust within the community we live.

Sincerely-Bryan Sampsel

[Signature]
The criminal conduct of the officers involved in death of George Floyd has no place in law enforcement. The action of the officers was in direct conflict with the values and sworn duty of every law enforcement officer in the United States.

Our basic function is to serve and protect. The officers involved in that tragedy failed to uphold that central tenet. In watching the video of George Floyd’s death, I was sickened by the officer’s behavior. I have communicated with current and retired officers from the department and nearby jurisdictions as well as police chiefs across Pennsylvania. I don’t know a single police officer that wasn’t disgusted and appalled by the actions and inactions of the officers that resulted in the death of Mr. Floyd.

The criminal actions of those officers are not congruent with the ethics, policies, training and practices of the Ferguson Township Police Department and has no place in law enforcement. Our agency will remain true to our mission statement and continue to work cooperatively with the community we serve.

Chris Albright

Chief of Police
June 3, 2020

Once again, our country is faced with an incident where trust in law enforcement is broken. The unacceptable outcome of this incident was the loss of a human life. The police officers involved in this deplorable act failed to preserve a life they were responsible to protect. It is our duty as law enforcement officers to protect human life. It is reprehensible to watch a video showing police officers engaged in brutality, negligence, and failing to render aid.

Our community deserves the highest level of professionalism from our police officers. The Patton Township Police Department continues to build positive relationships with our community. We strive to treat everyone we encounter with courtesy, dignity and respect. Our policy directs our officers to verbally de-escalate incidents prior to using force. If met by resistance, officers shall only use the minimal amount of reasonable and necessary force to affect the arrest.

Our officers annually receive training in use of force, bias and cultural diversity. We will continue to ensure that we have the most highly trained and educated officers patrolling the streets of our community.

The Patton Township Police Department is committed to continuing to build trust with all members of our community. We understand that this incident has fractured that trust nationwide, but we are willing to continue working with and listening to our community.

Tyler S. Jolley  
Chief of Police  
Patton Township Police Department
Time and time again, our country is faced with incidents involving law enforcement where the public questions law enforcement as a whole. At Spring Township Police, we are fully committed to ensuring that the residents of Spring Township have the utmost confidence in our department. After watching the video widely shared of Mr. Floyd’s death, I was appalled. That type of behavior has no place in law enforcement and will not be tolerated at Spring Township.

The Spring Township Police Department will continue to build our relationship with the community and strive daily to do that. Spring Township will treat any individual with respect, dignity and professionalism no matter what their religion, race, creed or sexual orientation. We have recently implemented body cameras to be as transparent as possible with the citizens we serve.

Officers at Spring Township receive annual training in topics like cultural diversity, implicit bias, crisis intervention and use of force. This ensures that officers have the best and most current training at their disposal in critical situations.

We understand that incidents like the one in Minneapolis will cause major setbacks in the trust of Law Enforcement, but that will not change our mission to treat everyone with the respect that every human deserves.

Ronald Schall
Officer in Charge
Spring Township Police Department
As Chief of the State College Police Department, I am deeply saddened and troubled by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The actions of those police officers leading to the death of Mr. Floyd are incomprehensible and in no way reflect the training standards of a professional police officer whose sworn oath represents a solemn commitment to protect and serve.

The behavior displayed by these four (4) police officers, whether it be by their actions or their inactions, constitutes an epic failure on their part leading to the ultimate cost; the loss of a life.

Their actions are not indicative of the overwhelming majority of police officers in our country who put on a uniform every day to protect and serve their communities to include the officers of the State College Police Department. The performance of these four (4) officers involved in Mr. Floyd’s death fell gravely short of this mission, for they neither provided protection for Mr. Floyd who was in distress, nor did they serve their community in the process.

While many of us in law enforcement generally refrain from commenting publicly on the actions of officers employed by other agencies, this situation is different and requires a response. While the distance between State College, Pennsylvania and Minneapolis, Minnesota is 980 miles, make no mistake the ripple effects of this tragic incident will be felt by all of us in law enforcement throughout this country. Those of us who work hard to build trust and understanding within our communities, especially our communities of color, understand how these actions undermine the public faith and trust in the police profession everywhere.

The officers of the State College Police Department value the dignity of every individual and will continue to emphasize and embrace the ethnic and cultural diversity of our community.

Chief John F. Gardner
June 1, 2020
Response to the tragic death of George Floyd

May 30, 2020

To the Penn State community,

The tragic circumstances surrounding the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, following other recent unspeakable tragedies, makes clear yet again that systemic discrimination and unjust racial disparities continue to plague our country. It is past time for change.

We cannot remain silent in the face of this heart-breaking reality. As an institution of higher education, we have an obligation to fight ignorance and intolerance, model inclusivity and embrace the power that diversity represents.

In the face of hatred and bias, we must speak out. We must not accept apathy, indifference or silence, otherwise we allow hatred, prejudice and intolerance to grow.

Our message today is, foremost, one of profound compassion for all who live in fear that the color of their skin, gender identity, ethnicity or religion makes them a target of hate. Our hearts ache as we can only imagine the trauma, pain and frustration that many are feeling at this time.

This message also reaffirms Penn State’s commitment to disrupting hate, bias and racism whenever and wherever we encounter it, and to creating the most inclusive and diverse community that we possibly can—one that is free of discrimination; one that embraces differences; and one that respects all individuals.

We support our community as you express your sadness and anger through peaceful protest, and we know it is even more challenging to support and lift each other up during this global pandemic, with the added difficulty of social distancing. However, please know that our entire University community grieves with you, supports you and joins with you as we strive for positive change.

Eric J. Barron

President, Penn State