



## NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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**PATRICK YOES**  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

**JIM PASCO**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

25 November 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to you on behalf of the membership of the Fraternal Order of Police to strongly urge you to consider a pardon for Stephanie C. Mohr, a former law enforcement officer with the Prince George's County Police Department in Maryland, who—after a second trial in 2001—was unjustly convicted and sentenced to ten years for the actions of her canine partner.

Officer Mohr was a nine-year veteran of the Prince George's County Police Department. She was the agency's first female canine handler and the first to complete a rigorous training program to become certified in bomb detection. Her record includes twenty-five letters of commendation and two awards for meritorious service. She was a distinguished and decorated officer, who was promoted to the rank of corporal when she was unjustly charged by the Clinton Justice Department for civil rights violations and conspiracy charges.

The facts of her case are these—in September 1995, Officer Mohr was on patrol with her canine partner, a German Shepherd named Valk. They were assigned to the Takoma Park area, which had suffered a number of recent burglaries. They received a call for backup from Officer Wendell Brantley, who had spotted two men on the roof of a store, and a subsequent request for a canine unit from responding Sergeant Dennis Bonn, both of whom were officers with the Takoma Park Police Department.

Officer Mohr, Valk, and Sergeant Anthony Delozier responded to the call and confronted the two suspects, Ricardo Mendez and Jorge Herrera Cruz. During the brief standoff, Mendez ignored repeated instructions to raise his hands in the air and made a furtive move that looked as if he were about to flee the scene. In full accordance with her training, Officer Mohr released her canine, who also performed as he was trained to do. Valk executed the department's standard "bite and hold," allowing the officers to take Mendez into custody. The two men were charged with 4th degree burglary.

Five years later, just one day before the statute of limitations was set to expire, Officer Mohr was indicted by the U.S. Department of Justice for civil rights violations and conspiracy charges. Federal prosecutors, who were investigating the Prince George's County Police Department for potential civil rights

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violations, cut a plea deal with Sergeant Bonn, who agreed to a plea deal in exchange for his testimony contradicting the sworn testimony of Officer Mohr and Sergeant Delozier.

At her first trial, Officer Mohr was found not guilty of conspiracy. A hung jury, voting 11 to 1 in favor of Mohr, failed to reach a unanimous verdict on the civil rights charge, and jurors from that first trial described the case as lacking merit. This did not deter Federal prosecutors, who sought and won a retrial that was held in 2001. In this second trial, the U.S. taxpayers flew Herrera Cruz back from El Salvador to testify against her and Mendez, a Federal inmate serving time on narcotics charges, also appeared. The judge also allowed prejudicial information into evidence, making it much easier for the prosecutor to convince a jury that Officer Mohr's decision to release her canine partner to subdue a fleeing suspect was an act of racism, and thus, a violation of the civil rights of a suspected burglar illegally present in the United States.

Because Stephanie Mohr was a police officer, because her canine partner was considered to be a "deadly weapon," and because the suspect she and her partner arrested was a racial minority, she was sentenced to ten years. Ten years for actions taken in the line of duty and actions consistent with her training and that of her canine partner.

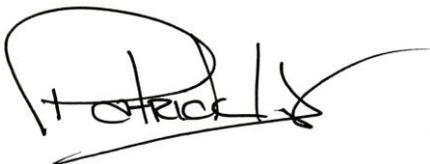
The FOP strongly believes in the United States system of justice, and we believe that everyone within the system ought to be treated fairly and without regard to the color of their skin or color of their uniform. We also realize that no system is perfect. And when our system fails, it is incumbent on those who serve the higher aim of justice to recognize that fact and to correct those errors. It is for this reason that the very foundation of our Republic, the Constitution, bestows upon the President the power and authority to pardon or commute the sentences of those persons who have suffered a miscarriage of justice.

It is clear to me that our system of justice failed in this case. Stephanie Mohr did her duty. She should not have had to serve ten years in prison for honorably serving the people of Prince George's County for nine.

Mr. President, you know better than most about injustice and unfairness. What happened to Officer Mohr was both. Since completing her sentence in 2011, she has rebuilt her life and reconnected with her son, who was only three when she went to prison. But her conviction and the unjust ordeal of her incarceration haunts her personal and professional life.

As the National President of the Fraternal Order of Police and speaking with the voices of our more than 356,000 members, I am calling on you to use your power to mend this miscarriage of justice and to pardon Stephanie C. Mohr and erase her wrongful conviction. If I can provide you any additional information about her case or circumstances, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Executive Director, Jim Pasco, in my Washington office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Yoes", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Patrick Yoes  
National President