



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

328 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N.E.
WASHINGTON, DC 20002
PHONE 202-547-8189 • FAX 202-547-8190

CHUCK CANTERBURY
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

JAMES O. PASCO, JR.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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**CONTACT: JIM PASCO
(202) 547-8189**

FOP: HATE-FUELED VIOLENCE KILLS 5 IN DALLAS STATEMENT FROM FOP NATIONAL PRESIDENT CHUCK CANTERBURY

Only a few hours had passed since police-involved shootings of armed suspects in Louisiana and Minnesota before social media lit up with calls to kill and murder law enforcement officers. Elected officials like Governor Mark B. Dayton (D) of Minnesota were quick to judge the tragedy as motivated by a police officer's racism, stating baldly that had the gunman been white, he would be alive today.

President Obama, speaking from Poland, said that we need to "reduce the appearance or reality of racial bias in law enforcement."

This rush to judgement is not new. We saw it in Ferguson—hate speech directed at an officer who was just doing his job. Called a killer and murderer, he was cleared of any wrong-doing. We saw that rush to judgment again yesterday—with hyperbolic accusations leveled against law enforcement officers before the investigations have even begun. All of this violence began or was triggered by hate spewed on social media and even in the mainstream press.

None of this inflammatory rhetoric has been challenged by elected officials. Quite the opposite—statements like those of Governor Dayton and President Obama provide tacit approval for those who spew their hate and contempt for our nation's law enforcement officers. Last night, in Dallas, the rhetoric was translated into horrific violence leading to the death of five law enforcement officers. Other officers as well as civilian by-standers were also wounded in the course of this mass shooting—a shooting that is absolutely a hate crime.

The U.S. Department of Justice, always so quick to insert itself into local investigations, in many cases before the preliminary investigations are completed, needs to investigate this mass murder event as a hate crime. Congress needs to act on H.R. 4760 and this Administration needs to condemn the hateful, racist speech which has triggered this horrific violence against our nation's police officers.

I am heartsick with grief for the law enforcement families who are mourning their loved ones in Dallas.

— BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION —

This mass murder event comes just more than a year after a gunman in an armored vehicle launched an assault on Dallas Police Headquarters in an effort to kill law enforcement officers. One of the pipe bombs the assailant had placed outside the building was detonated. Fortunately, no officers were injured in this full-scale assault. Law enforcement officers used .50 caliber rounds to disable the armored vehicle—rounds which regulations issued by the Obama Administration are now “prohibited” from Federal issuance to State and local agencies. Enough is enough!

When the shooting started, law enforcement officers immediately acted to protect those participating in the anti-police demonstration because that is their job. Part of our job is to put ourselves in harm’s way to protect the public—but being a target for a hate-filled race warrior whose idea of justice is to murder law enforcement officers is not part of the job.

President Obama said yesterday: “When incidents like this [police involved shootings] occur, there is a big chunk of our fellow citizenry that feels as if because of the color of their skin they are not being treated the same.”

Our nation’s law enforcement officers are not being treated the same. We’re being treated as an enemy—as targets to be eliminated—not because of the color of our skin, but the color of our uniform. Enough is enough. We have to end this.

By way of information, over 27% of State and local officers in the U.S. are from minority communities. We challenge the FBI and Federal agencies to do better in this regard before they second-guess our efforts.

I do not want to spend this summer attending funerals for officers killed just because they wear a badge. Enough is enough!

The Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, with more than 330,000 members.