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NATIONAL FOP PRESIDENT RESPONDS TO MCCA'S ATTACK ON UNIONS: *Don't make excuses - make a difference*

Following the tragic events in Minneapolis last week, our nation was justifiably horrified by this event and we share in the pain and anger from the communities we protect. In the aftermath of an event like this, we struggle to understand how such incidents occur in policing today.

It is why I am so saddened by the statement issued by the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) which suggests the blame for Mr. Floyd's death and other preventable tragedies are the fault of the law enforcement labor movement or the local police union. I had hoped that law enforcement officers of all ranks would join hands now and collectively dig deep within to improve our profession instead of pointing fingers and making excuses. After a policing failure of this magnitude, the public deserves solutions, not rhetoric.

I would like to remind Chief Acevedo, President of the MCCA, that a contract is a binding agreement between two parties who mutually agreed on the terms, not a mandate imposed by a labor union as they now assert. To suggest that law enforcement managers are forced into agreements with provisions they find unacceptable is at variance with common sense. Situational expediency, hand-wringing and deflection is destructive leadership, it is disingenuous and it is a disservice to the public we serve.

I agree whole-heartedly that law enforcement executives should use every appropriate and legal authority to hold their officers accountable. But I must take issue with the MCCA's fear-mongering. Suggesting that unions are somehow the root cause of these tragedies is simply a deflection from their own failures. The MCCA should accept responsibility for less than effective recruitment and screening practices and they should be willing to partner with police unions as we continue to seek ways to improve policing in America.

I respectfully suggest that the signatories of the MCCA statement hold themselves accountable. Unions do not recruit, hire, train, supervise or discipline officers. That is not our job—it is the duty of the law enforcement executives who lead the agency. Problem officers are usually hired, not made. The MCCA must not be allowed to shamelessly exploit this tragedy and discredit unions or other organizations who represent the men and women who police our streets and neighborhoods. If the MCCA is looking for a villain in this scenario, perhaps they should look within their own ranks.

Unions are legally bound to defend the rights of police officers, hired by law enforcement executives, whose conduct has been called into question. Contracts, due process, common sense, and public safety are integral parts of the labor-management relationship.

I urge MCCA—don't take the easy way out and blame unions for all of their problems. We **MUST** work together with the communities we serve to build trust. We need to take a hard look at the underlying problems within our profession and the challenges of policing today.

Let's make a difference, not excuses.

The Fraternal Order of Police is the largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States with more than 351,000 members.

--BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION--

