



NEVADA SHERIFFS' & CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION

Sheriff Jerry Allen - President
Chief Pam Ojeda - Vice President
Sheriff Darin Balaam - Secretary/Treasurer
Deputy Chief Chris Crawforth - Sgt.-at-Arms
Inspector General James Jones - Board Member-at-Large

Dear Representatives of the Nevada Legislature,

The membership of the Nevada Chiefs' and Sheriffs' Association write to express our unwavering support for law enforcement across the country and to ask for your assistance in tempering the anti-police rhetoric that is jeopardizing the safety of our officers. We especially rely on you, as the leaders of the Nevada legislative body, to discourage dangerous disinformation and to help us restore the country's faith in the overwhelming majority of law-enforcement officers who perform their jobs honorably and bring stability to our cities and states.

The tragic and preventable death of George Floyd at the hands of four Minneapolis police officers shined a national spotlight on bad actors within the law-enforcement profession. At the same time, data simply does not support claims that law enforcement is systemically racist or structurally biased. Despite the lack of available evidence to support the anti-police narrative, it proliferates and has spawned radical reactions such as the current calls to "defund the police," as well as increases in violence against police—ranging from assaults to assassinations.¹

Last year in the United States, a country with a population of 330 million people, 1,004 civilians were fatally shot by police officers.² The vast majority of these officer-involved shootings were justifiable, and most involved an armed or dangerous subject. There were nine fatal shootings of unarmed black persons (down from thirty-eight in 2015) and nineteen fatal shootings of unarmed white persons (down from thirty-two in 2015).³ Those deaths represent 0.1% of all black homicide victims and 0.3% of all white homicide victims.⁴

1 "Assassinated": Shock After Two NYPD Officers Gunned Down in Their Car, NBC NEWS (Dec. 20, 2014), <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/crime-courts/assassinated-shock-after-two-nypd-officers-gunned-down-their-car-n272436> [<http://perma.cc/Q36X-ZNLS>].

2 Police-Shootings Database, WASH. POST, <http://washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/> [<http://perma.cc/LNP7-EKAK>] (last visited June 11, 2020).

3 Id. It should be noted that the Washington Post "defines 'unarmed' broadly to include such cases as a suspect in Newark, N.J., who had a loaded handgun in his car during a police chase." Heather Mac Donald, The Myth of Systemic Police Racism, WALL ST. J., June 2, 2020, at A19. Hence, even these relatively low figures tend to overstate the reality.

4 See FED. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES, 2018, at expanded homicide data tbl.1 (2019), <http://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2018/crime-in-the-u.s.-2018/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-1.xls> [<http://perma.cc/HZ5W-X7GH>].



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The data indicate that exceedingly few encounters with police involve force. For example, only 2% of people who had any contact with police anytime in the prior twelve months said that officers used or even threatened to use force against them, according to the 2015 Police-Public Contact Survey conducted by United States Bureau of Justice Statistics.⁵ Over 58,000 officers were assaulted while performing their duties in 2018, according to FBI data collected from only two-thirds of law-enforcement agencies.⁶ That is an assault rate of 10.8 per 100 officers.⁷ Moreover, assaults with deadly weapons against the police occurred thirty-three times per day.⁸

Recent history confirms that when myths about the police are not strongly repudiated by our national and state leaders, law-enforcement officers lose their lives. In 2016, following a national rebellion against law enforcement—like what we are experiencing today—the number of officers shot and killed in the line of duty increased by 56% in that year alone.⁹ Twenty-one of those deaths were ambush-style shootings of law-enforcement officers.¹⁰ Who can forget the five officers murdered in attacks in Dallas, Texas, and the three officers murdered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in only a ten-day period? In recent weeks of national unrest, 750 officers have already been injured defending their communities from the violence that has swept our country.¹¹ Two members of law enforcement have already lost their lives.¹²

The law-enforcement agencies of our states and localities are constantly evolving –re-forming if you will– to ensure that their training, resources, and practices will best protect the safety of both the citizenry and the officers. These men and women regularly receive advanced certifications and degrees, use new equipment and technology, and engage in regular trainings. We know this because many of our offices and departments oversee law-enforcement training and enforce these high standards statewide. Many Nevada law-enforcement agencies have taken great strides to diversify their forces, institute policies that build trust and encourage problem-solving, and to be proactive in addressing racial and cultural disparities.

5 BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, NJC 251145, CONTACTS BETWEEN POLICE AND THE PUBLIC, 2015, at 16 (2018), <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpp15.pdf> [<http://perma.cc/9ERP-7LG6>].

6 FED. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS KILLED AND ASSAULTED, 2018 (2019), <http://ucr.fbi.gov/leoka/2018/topic-pages/officers-assaulted> [<http://perma.cc/D2K9-NT8F>] (noting that “the FBI collected assault data from 11,788 law enforcement agencies” regarding “federal, state, city, county, university and college, and tribal law enforcement officers”); BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, NJC 249681, NATIONAL SOURCES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT 1 (2016), <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/nsleed.pdf> [<http://perma.cc/J6XE-9XNJ>] (noting that “[l]aw enforcement in the United States is made up of about 18,000 federal, state, county, and local agencies”).

7 FED. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, *supra* note 6.

8 See FED. BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS KILLED AND ASSAULTED, 2018, at tbl.85 (2019), <http://ucr.fbi.gov/leoka/2018/tables/table-85.xls> [<http://perma.cc/7JVF-ELYB>].

9 Camila Domonoske, Number of Police Officers Killed by Firearms Rose in 2016, Study Finds, NPR (Dec. 30, 2016), <http://npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/12/30/507536360/number-of-police-officers-killed-by-firearms-rose-in-2016-study-finds> [<http://perma.cc/89U8-4S7G>].

10 *Id.*

11 Face the Nation (CBS television broadcast June 7, 2020) (interviewing U.S. Attorney General William Barr).

12 Daisy Nguyen, Officer Killed Near California Protest Identified, USA Today (June 1, 2020), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/06/01/george-floyd-protests-officer-killed-near-oakland-protest-identified/5308024002/> ; Minyvonne Burke, Retired St. Louis Police Captain Killed by Looters While Trying to Protect Friend's Shop, NBC News (June 3, 2020), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/retired-st-louis-police-captain-killed-looters-while-trying-protect-n1223386>



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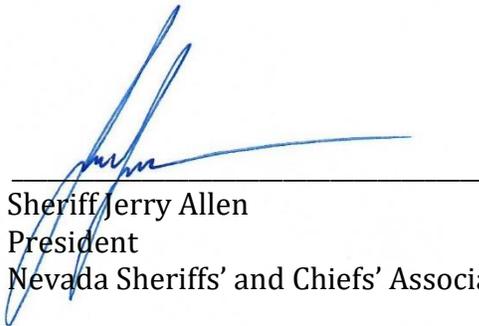


There is no level of government better equipped to assess the challenges that law enforcement is facing or what improvements can be made than the government closest to the people. The powers reserved to the States under the Tenth Amendment have been long recognized to include the power to establish and enforce laws protecting the welfare, safety, and health of the public—in other words, the police power. Congress should take care to recognize the ultimate authority of the States (your authority) over matters relating to policing, even as state, local, and federal partners work together cooperatively towards the common goal of public safety.

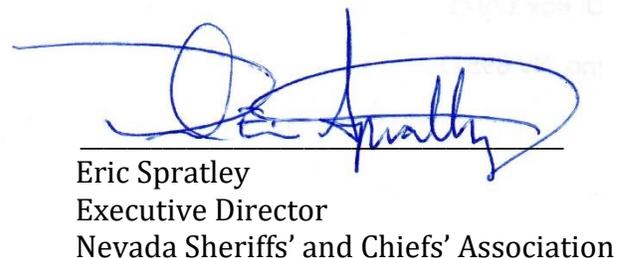
In closing, it is possible to support law enforcement and also speak out against the actions of those individuals who dishonor the badge. These two concepts are not mutually exclusive and is why there has been no support from Nevada law enforcement for the horrific decisions made by the officers involved in Mr. Floyd's death. Individuals, including members of Congress and state legislatures, are dangerously fanning the flames of emotion by tacitly or explicitly supporting the "Defund the Police" (or worse) movement. These comments are inciting chaos through the myth that Americans will be better off without the "thin blue line"—law enforcement—that stands between society and anarchy. Ultimately, it is the prerogative of cities, counties and states to choose the best course of action for their citizens. As for us, we stand with law enforcement and for a safer future for all Americans.

Signed on behalf of the Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association membership as unanimously approved July 22, 2020.

Thank you,



Sheriff Jerry Allen
President
Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association



Eric Spratley
Executive Director
Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association



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