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WAKE OFFICIAL AND NC SENATE NOMINEE ADVOCATING FOR INCREASED RALEIGH POLICE SALARIES

RALEIGH, NC - Dr. Scott Lassiter, a former Apex Town Councilman, current Wake Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor, and Assistant Principal in the Wake County Public School System, will address the Raleigh City Council at their regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday at 7 pm. Together with members of the Raleigh Police Protective Association, he will highlight the growing disparity in compensation for Raleigh Police Officers compared to their counterparts in other Wake County municipalities. Lassiter urges all concerned citizens to attend the meeting at Raleigh City Council Chambers to express their support. He emphasizes, "Nothing grabs the attention of elected leaders more effectively than when voters show up. It's crucial for them to see that the community values the RPD, which will encourage them to take appropriate action."

As a nominee for state senate in district 13, encompassing parts of Raleigh, Apex, Cary, Fuquay-Varina, Garner, Holly Springs, Knightdale, and unincorporated areas of Wake County served by the Wake County Sheriff's Office, Lassiter has extensively researched officer pay. He states, "I've examined the starting salaries of officers in each municipal police department serving NC Senate District 13, and our capital city's force is at a significant disadvantage. There are departments where the starting salary is $10,000 higher annually, accompanied by bonuses of $5,000."

According to recruitment and salary data compiled by Lassiter's campaign, starting salaries for police officers and deputies range from a low of $50,301 annually for a Raleigh Police Recruit to over $60,000 annually for beginning officers in Cary and Apex. Wake County Sheriff's Office Detention Officers, who are not required to hold an NC Basic Law Enforcement Training Certification like police officers, are being hired at a higher pay rate ($50,440 annually) than RPD recruits. Retention concerns also abound as RPD's senior officers' salaries cap-out tens of thousands of dollars less than comparable departments in our state and some smaller local municipalities.

Lassiter has been informed by both rank-and-file officers and departmental leadership that these non-competitive hiring salaries, coupled with the current pay scale for veteran officers, are contributing to public safety concerns. He explains, "Officers and management have personally shared their concerns with me. I've heard about officers being overworked, frequently reassigned from their primary duties to cover unfamiliar patrol areas, and placed in roles they are not used to. I've also heard anecdotes about detectives being used to supplement patrol officers- roles they're unaccustomed to. Through my experiences in municipal and county government, as well as in the school system, I understand that our police officers are often the first responders to highly volatile community incidents. It's crucial that we have our best personnel responding to these calls. The age-old adage 'you get what you pay for' undoubtedly applies to police work." The Lassiter campaign stated that there are at least 100 operational vacancies in the RPD directly attributed to inadequate compensation.

Lastly, Lassiter highlights a recent example where increased pay addressed a significant public safety issue in Wake County EMS. He recalls, "A few years ago, Wake County EMS faced severe staffing shortages, resulting in compromised service when called for literal matters of life and death. The county commissioners responded by raising salaries to competitive levels. This action not only filled vacancies but also restored the agency to a model for the nation. I urge the Raleigh City Council to similarly step up and return our state's capital city police department to model status. My constituents with Raleigh addresses deserve the same level of police protection as those in neighboring municipalities."

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