

The last few years in our country have been marked by division, and we now see the issue of racial bias by the police causing further discord. I am not writing to discuss the merits of this topic, but rather to look at the collateral damage to our officers and their families.

We have heard the saying, “Silence is Violence” shouted during protests in our city streets and echoed on social media, not only by protestors, but by some elected officials at all levels. Many of these elected officials— the same ones who seek law enforcement endorsements during campaign season and feature men and women in uniform on campaign materials— have suddenly gone silent on support of law enforcement, fearing the loss of votes or being labeled a racist. This silence is allowing violence and lawlessness against our officers to occur without consequence. Peaceful protest should foster debate and peaceful protestors can seek reform in an orderly manner.

However, what we are seeing is not peaceful. It is an attempt by some to use violence as a form of extortion and consequently silence the debate and distort the cause. Our elected officials have had years to address countless issues of great importance, yet they have reached no resolution due to endless debate. Suddenly, we see action taken, literally overnight, to defund and perhaps disband police departments without hearing from all the voices of the community all while violent crime is at unprecedented levels. Elected officials should be reminded that their oath of office requires them to protect and defend the rights of ALL people, including our police officers.

I have stood alongside our officers at many of the protests and at various crime scenes throughout the city. I have witnessed the physical and verbal abuse directed at them. Loud, vile, and obscene language; racial slurs; derogatory remarks regarding their family members, all from within inches of their face and all with the intent to taunt them into reacting. Rocks, bricks, boards, chunks of cement, frozen bottles of water, bottles of urine and many other objects have been thrown at them. City leaders and local media who have been present offer little, if any, condemnation or reporting of these attacks. Instead, the police are chastised for defending themselves, for protecting the property of the city and its citizens, and somehow even blamed for inciting the violence. Some in the media are more intent on dragging up past misfortunes and allegations of misconduct by officers than reporting these attacks our officers are receiving. This has all come at a tremendous cost to many officers’ physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. Police families are being told that their father, daughter, mother, brother, or husband is evil by neighbors and so called “friends” who have gone dark and “unfriended” them. This lack of support is causing our officers to feel anger, disillusionment, disenfranchisement, betrayal, confusion, discouragement, and abandonment. Through this all they have acted as true professionals performing their duties with respect for all as they have always done, and as they always will. I have never been prouder of the officers I have the privilege of ministering to as they carry on with the mission of protecting the citizens and standing for law and order.

The claim that ALL police officers are violent and racist based upon their profession and the actions of a few is the very act of racism that is being demonstrated against. Let us be reminded that we are all created in the image of God who sent His son Jesus Christ to the cross for the salvation of all man kind in the most inclusive act of love the world has ever known. Burt Bacharach wrote lyrics many years ago that we could all benefit from. *“What the world needs now is love, sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of. No not just for some but for everyone.”*

May God heal our nation and protect our police officers.

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