

10/19/20

Open Statement on the Importance of Greater Public Safety in the City of Minneapolis

The signatories below live or work - in many cases both - in Minneapolis, and care deeply about the success of our City for everyone. None of us, nor any organizations we are affiliated with, are parties to the Residents v. Minneapolis City Council, Mayor Jacob Frey lawsuit to be heard on 10/19/20.

We all, however, support the goal of the plaintiffs; *insuring adequate and effective policing throughout the community as part of an overall, multi-faceted plan to keep all citizens who live, work and visit here safe.*

Attached is an outline of a “both/and” means of providing greater public safety that a broad based, citywide group of business leaders and residents have discussed, representing a possible consensus approach for Minneapolis. It is consistent with the aims of the lawsuit as well.

We are part of one City. North/South/Downtown, business and residential alike. Bound together by a growing concern about the public safety challenges facing our community. Residents v. Mpls reflects the serious and urgent nature of this situation. We ask for development of a coherent plan to address the issues raised by the suit in the weeks ahead. Our “both/and” outline is offered as a constructive suggestion to elected officials ultimately responsible to make Minneapolis safe.

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1200 on the Mall

Bob and Sue Greenberg
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10/16/20

“Both/and” is the approach Minneapolis must take to provide for safety across our City. This is an urgent matter for our City.

The debate about public safety in Minneapolis, when it comes to the role of law enforcement, has been misunderstood as an “either/or” matter when in fact it is “both/and”. For our City to be safe for everyone, we must have an effective, just and trusted police department operating in concert with other public safety strategies so that resources appropriate to the various safety concerns facing our residents, workers and visitors are readily available.

An effective, just and trusted MPD means:

- Addressing the diminished numbers of sworn officers available to perform the critical functions only law enforcement can fulfill;
- Recruiting over the course of 2021 three diverse classes of the best and brightest candidates interested in joining a department undergoing a culture shift led by Chief Arradondo;
- Policy and procedural reforms which strengthen effective administration of the department, some of which must be negotiated and others of which must be legislated, consistent with the Chief’s vision for MPD;
- Embracing a broad range of approaches to safety in addition to policing;
- Accountability for both officer and departmental performance;
- Community support for building back and transforming MPD;

Law enforcement alone will not meet all the safety needs of our diverse community. Work to build on existing partnerships which respond to safety challenges in our community (e.g., mental health co-responders, homeless outreach, criminal justice diversion) must continue. New models overseen through the Office of Violence Prevention which draw on community assets to engage and interrupt negative behaviors before they occur bring a needed public health lens to public safety work. These models must evolve into reliable, 24 – 7 service delivery systems to be truly effective as a complement and in some cases alternative to law enforcement.

In the end, law enforcement through a transformed MPD, and effective complementary strategies which introduce professional and community resources, must be knitted together in a seamless plan to make Minneapolis safe for all. That is the ultimate vision of a “both/and” approach.

Moving in this direction is a matter of great urgency for Minneapolis. Too much time has been spent on polarizing debate at a time when our community must work toward great consensus. This statement is offered in the spirit of achieving that end.