



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

MICHIGAN STATE POLICE: WE EXPECT BETTER!

DETROIT – The recent message posted on the Facebook page of Col. Kriste Kibbey Etue, Director of the Michigan State Police, is beneath the office of this department and is a tragic reminder of a lack of fundamental understanding. This is particularly true in the matter of the right to publicly protest. The words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. still ring true today, *“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”*

Perhaps Col. Etue needs to be reminded of the State Constitution of Michigan, Article 11, Public Offices and Employment, Section 1, Oath of Public Office: *“All officers, legislative, executive, and judicial before entering upon the duties of their respective offices shall take and subscribe the following oath and affirmation: I do solemnly swear that I will support the constitution of the U.S. and this state that I will faithfully discharge the duties of.... according to the best of my ability.”*

Part of the U.S. Constitution is of course the First Amendment, which states, *“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”*

The disrespectful and demeaning post of Col. Etue concludes with the following remarks: **“We stand with the heroes, not a bunch of rich, entitled, arrogant, ungrateful, anti-American degenerates. Signed, we the people.”**

The U.S. Constitution guarantees these so call entitled-individuals the right to take a knee, sit on a bus, carry a protest sign, raise their fist in the air, stand at attention, lock arms, or even leave the room. It is the right guaranteed to every American when done in a peaceful non-violent manner.

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The real arrogance is made clear by those individuals who are charged with the responsibility to enforce public policy. In some cases, they are even charged with making policies that affect the lives of the people that they are duty bound to serve. Why would the head of the Michigan State Police get involved with players taking a knee on a football field? A much greater need is to focus on the issue of a state trooper firing a taser through his vehicle window, resulting in the death of 15-year-old Damon Grimes.

The Michigan State Police have a very checkered history when it comes to the recruitment and retention of minorities and women in their department. Many have not forgotten the history of the Michigan State Police, formerly under a federal consent decree because of problematic issues within the department. It must be noted that there are more important issues that *really* matter. There is:

- a. A need for greater diversity in the department;
- b. A need for an executive staff that reflects the entire community;
- c. A need for unity within the department and respect for people outside with different backgrounds, racial and gender;
- d. An expectation of law enforcement and human dignity that will be expressed at the highest level, throughout the department.

Less we forget, the men and women who take a knee, who happen to be people of color for the most part, have a legacy of fighting in every war this nation has ever undertaken. In fact, the first patriot to die in the founding of our nation was of course a black man. He took more than a knee, he took a bullet. His name, in case you have forgotten, was Crispus Attucks. Athletes are not taking a knee to denigrate the flag or the national anthem. They are taking a knee or locking arms to illuminate the need for equal justice for all American citizens, regardless of race, creed, or color. Many of them serve in the military or police reserves, help the poor, provide scholarships, aid the youth in summer and winter, work with returning citizens, and contribute millions of dollars to the causes of veterans throughout our nation. Their fathers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, uncles, and others serve in the military, each and every day. They deserve better. We expect better from the head of the Michigan State Police.

The Boston Tea Party wasn't about bad tea. It was about taxation without representation. Rosa Parks did not sit down in the front of the bus because she was in a hurry to get off. She was on a mission to change the racist policy of public transportation. The right to protest should not make our nation bitter, it should help to make all of us better, whether we agree or not. Perhaps it is time to take another look at the internal policies, and the hiring and recruitment practices of the Michigan State Police. According to the department's own GUIDING VALUES AND PRINCIPLES, "We strive for integrity, commitment, and excellence in our daily work, and fairness and mutual respect in our relationships with our partners." If that be the case, then let's do it.

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