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OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

MICHIGAN STATE POLICE

DETROIT – The mission and vision statement for the department of the Michigan State Police is written to provide direction and guidance. Following these statements are the GUIDING VALUES AND PRINCIPLE. The first line of these principles is, *“We strive for integrity, commitment, and excellence in our daily work and fairness, and mutual respect in our relationships with our partners.”*

It appears the GUIDING VALUES AND PRINCIPLES no longer apply to the department or they are being grossly neglected as a result of their lack of implementation. The relationship with the partners seem to be in disarray. The recent posting of the director of the Michigan State Police has be-smirched as well as cast a shadow of dysfunctionality over a department that is in great need of an infusion of diversity. It requires fairness and a functional sensitivity to both the employees it retains and the community it serves.

Article 4, under the Code of Conduct, Section 4.5, Individual Department states, *“Members shall maintain a level of conduct in their personal and business affairs which is in keeping with the highest standards of the law enforcement profession. Members shall conduct themselves at all times both on and off duty in a manner that will reflect favorably upon the department. Conduct unbecoming a member shall include that which brings the department into disrepute or reflects discredit on the individual as a member of the department or that which impairs the efficiency of the department.”*

Further, Section 4.5a states, *“Members shall not make public statements on or off duty which show a reckless disregard for the truth.”*

The truth of the matter is that the issues confronting the Michigan State Police go well beyond the disrespectful, demeaning, and prejudicial characterization of athletes taking a knee, as *“arrogant, ungrateful, and anti-American degenerates,”* as posted by Col. Kriste Kibbey Etue.

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While we recognize the leadership void that Col. Etue has created within this department, it is the institution of the department that must be rehabilitated, reformed, and transformed.

Since 1993, as a result of the lifting of the federal consent decree on the Michigan State Police, it has been a downward spiral resulting in a lack of African Americans, Latinos, and women, at both the trooper and executive levels. We have moved from 12.5% in 1993 to 6.4% in 2017. This is a remarkable disappointment in both the recruitment, the hiring, and the practice as offered by what should be Michigan's premier police department. It is a shame, indeed, when African Americans make up 14.2% of Michigan's population that out of 36 Michigan State Police officers with the rank of inspector or higher, only 1 or less than 3% is African American.

As a result of the lack of diversity, the department also leaves itself open for unlimited lawsuits, costing the state millions of dollars. It is also an unnecessary drain on the state budget as monies used for lawsuits could be used for training and the advancement of a representative force for communities traditionally overlooked.

We are aware of the retirement of many African Americans, following the lifting of the federal consent decree 24 years ago. We believe the department should have made plans to adjust for this reality. Such plans should have included:

- a. Increasing its recruitment program for advancement from the mid-level position to the senior position;
- b. Creating a more culturally sensitive testing mechanism;
- c. Implementing a more racially conscious and community-oriented understanding and value from various communities;
- d. Developing a wider resource for racial sensitivity training using organizations from local communities in which troopers serve, (i.e., NAACP, Urban League, New Detroit, National Action Network, Council of Baptist Pastors, Wayne County Community College District).

It is no surprise, therefore, that we would now be witnessing such posts from the leader of this organization. Posts such as this have a tendency to impugn the character and motivation of people with different views. The current state of the Michigan State Police tends to divide and create certain biases among the employees as well as the communities in which the state police are pledged to serve.

We have asked the Governor for an opportunity to sit down and discuss the future of the director as well as the department, its policies, programs, and recruitment procedures. We further believe that our congressional representatives need to look very closely at the Michigan State Police. We are calling on them to look at the operation and the ability of the state police to be an equitable law enforcement department in communities of color. One has to wonder if the consent decree was lifted prematurely.

We are here today because steps must be taken in order to correct this pattern of going backwards. Is there a commitment to all Michiganders to going forward and include every segment of our population in such an important department? We will be working in conjunction with our civil rights partners, members of the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus and certainly our congressional representatives to hold the Michigan State Police and the Governor accountable. The Governor has the responsibility of selecting the director. The director must lead and direct fairly, without bias, and with measurable results that include people of color. No director should be promoted or given a raise up when the programs and policies have gone down. This issue is not going away. Even if one changes the director, but does not change the policies, the recruitment, and the makeup of the force, the job is still not done. The Michigan State Police must change to become a real department for all its citizens and not just a select few.

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