

Eagle Forum Report

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Our Liberties Matter

POLICE ENSURE PEACE

by Jennifer Hauptert, wife of a police officer

A few far left organizations are now acting out in ways which contradict the purpose they surely intend: Respect! What about the other BLM? The alter ego to Black Lives Matter is Blue Lives Matter. ALL lives matter.

The leftist groups are encouraging the brutalization of police families. The police have always been disrespected, yet more subtly, but now it's terrifying. Police families are not allowing their police spouse to park, as most are required to, on their home street or on their driveway.

Formerly, the police cruiser was used to encourage availability and community support. Now, masked thugs are cruising around neighborhoods in search of that police cruiser. Several police spouses have reported their children being threatened, insulted, and worse. These once-safe neighborhoods are in as much danger as our American freedoms.

Two cases are being publicized as posters for police brutality and murder. But, take a moment and do real research, not just review biased media sources, but actually pull the toxicology, the arrest history, and the previous resisting and endangering the lives of these police officers.

The media has not reported important details. In both cases, the officers abided precinct protocol. They were forced to protect themselves or, perhaps, not return to their family at the end of the shift. In both cases, these officers were dispatched to the scene; they did not seek out the perpetrator. Responding to a call cannot be equated to premeditated murder. These officers should not be criminalized equally as intended murderers. They would not have known of, nor encountered, these men in their personal lives. They were dispatched to fulfill their lawful duty to enforce the law. Yet, to try a police officer as a murderer is a dangerous precedent.

The motivators behind this kind of ideology and tactics know very well how destroying the police could impact society. The leftist organizers want to thwart the success of our America by promoting chaos, dividing our country, and weakening America. History has shown what happens to weakened societies: they are overthrown.

I understand that people can resent the police at times. No one wants to be pulled over for speeding, drunk driving, or arrested for public intoxi-

cation. But the choice to break rules harms peaceful, safe communities.

My family has been approached countless times in public, at restaurants, at our home by individuals asking who owns the police cruiser in my driveway. They have shouted to my little children in our front yard, off our private drive "f'n pigs", "loser PoPo", or worse. Many dangerous encounters have transpired from former arrestees. My children have even seen chalk drawings mocking their police parent with statements such as "bug-eyed cop". We actually laughed at that one, for when those sun glasses are



on, it is indeed a little buggy. Yet, in all earnestness, who raised that child to disrespect the police?

This form of hatred begins at home. It begins from a place of ignorance or irresponsibility. It is the drunken abuser parent who is arrested for beating up their spouse in front of their children. Then when the outcome is not free of incident, yet results in an arrest, they opt to hate the

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police. They certainly do not look at themselves in the mirror and think, “this is my fault, I must be better!” So, the tirade against the police begins. “This or that COP/PIG was bad or evil for costing our family so much money, they should have butted out!” The child learns to have contempt for police. Yet, the officers did not ask to come to their home to enforce the law, they were called! Police are usually called by the victim or a neighbor and then they were instructed to attend the scene of the incident. These officers abide their instruction.

Sadly, this singular group of people have always been hated and isn’t it wrong to hate? It is as wrong to hate police as it is to hate any other group of people.

What happens when the vast majority of police determine they are not represented by their leadership, mayor, governor, senator, congressman, and President? Well, their pay is not an enticement. Officers tend to work for below the national wage average. So, they endure low pay, no support, community hatred, terrible shift hours (four days on, two off), and now the new threat of murderous intent, physical violence upon themselves and perhaps their family, because officers must wear a badge with their last name on it. A sensible evaluation will result in a dramatic decline in new hires and a reduction in police from the workforce as a whole. Wearing a

name on a badge enables criminals to find police home addresses in most states.

Without a full police force, crime will increase, fear will be commonplace and then our American freedom is lost. Reducing the police force is a stated goal of the leftist agitators.

It is time for a reform. Police are a different breed of individual, which used to be honored. These officers, while not perfect, are human, seldom misfit their uniform. They intend to “Serve and Protect” their

communities. Therefore, we who benefit should protect the protectors.

Certainly, many departments would welcome a science-based stratagem to effectively and safely ensure an officer can hold a dangerous criminal without the likelihood of death. Not one officer wants to kill a person on his shift. Reallocating a non-police entity to handle calls which may be better served by a clinical social worker, such as mental illness calls, should be implemented. Too many parents call the police to parent their child and they should call another entity.

In July 2015, the Indiana state legislature passed (with 99 percent approval) a bill to ensure the home addresses of police officers remain private. This law includes county tax databases, as well as internet databases which commonly list most home addresses. This law has helped to provide a little bit of security for the fam-

ilies of police. This law does not ensure the safety of all police families, but it can help. To receive an address removal, one must write the address databases to ask that they abide by the law. Not one police family should be at risk for harm or exploitation because their spouse or parent opted to become a law enforcer.

I encourage law enforcement officers in every state to begin the process of protecting police and their families by asking to have their names removed from their badge and replaced with a number. Then have police home addresses protected as private by passing a law in your state. Our local police force is our front line and without police protection, America will not be free as we once were. Many are called to law enforcement as a vocation. *Blessed are the peacekeepers, for they shall be called the children of God.* — Matthew 5:9 



THESE 45 WORDS MATTER

No other country guarantees the Five Freedoms in the First Amendment. Exercise your rights!

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.

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NO VIRUS EXCEPTION IN THE FIRST AMENDMENT

by Lathan Watts, Director of Public Affairs for First Liberty Institute a non-profit law firm and think tank dedicated to defending religious liberty for all Americans and a Regional Fellow of National Review Institute. FirstLiberty.org

When those entrusted with the power to protect the God-given rights of the people do so selectively, arbitrarily picking and choosing which freedoms are worthy of protection and to what extent, then we are no longer a nation governed by the rule of law but by the whims of men.

President Lincoln once observed, “Nearly all men can stand the test of adversity, but if you really want to test a man’s character give him power.”

America now faces a convergence of calamities unlike any our nation has dealt with in nearly a century. Amidst the confusion, what has become clear is the character of those in power is being tested, and some are found as lacking in character as in their understanding of the Constitution.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic from many governors and local elected officials is a primary example. From the first days of the crisis, houses of worship across the land closed their doors, went to online services, and sought to work with government officials to ensure the safety of their communities while trying to meet the spiritual needs of their congregations.

Not surprisingly, some officials abused their power and restricted religious liberty far more than other freedoms.

Attorneys from First Liberty Institute fought back, securing a critical victory for religious freedom and On Fire Christian Church in Louisville, KY. In that case, then U.S. District Court Judge Justin Walker granted a temporary restraining order preventing Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer from blocking On Fire Church from

holding drive-in services on Easter. This was “the lawsuit heard across the nation,” the first case filed and won in defense of religious liberty amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

First Liberty also filed a federal lawsuit against Greenville, Mississippi’s Mayor, Errick Simmons, on behalf of King James Bible Baptist Church, seeking to stop his unconstitutional order from prohibiting CDC-compliant drive-in church services. Later the same day, Mayor Simmons announced

that he was rescinding his order, and allowing drive-in church services to operate free of government interference (provided that they continued adhering to proper CDC guidelines).

In another case of government gone wrong, First Liberty Institute and the North Creek Law Firm represented Joshua Freed at a hearing to challenge Washington State Governor Jay Inslee’s ban on religious gatherings of any size in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Freed simply wanted to meet with one other person at a time, in his yard, to discuss the Bible and pray together, but Inslee’s order prohibited even that. As a result of the hearing, attorneys for Governor Inslee acknowledged that home-based Bible studies and prayer meetings were permissible, and that the Governor would not enforce the

rules against home Bible studies on a one-on-one basis.

Our firm also represented churches in Texas, New York, and Illinois against overreaching government officials.

First Liberty was also called upon to stand with Ken Ham — CEO of Answers in Genesis, the Creation Museum, and the Ark Encounter in Kentucky — as they had an unfortunate “encounter” of their own with the outrageous wave of religious discrimination affecting churches, houses of worship, and religious organizations all over the country.

Even though many shops and businesses in Kentucky were beginning to reopen, Ken Ham’s organization was not allowed to do so — leaving hundreds of furloughed employees out of work. As Ken puts it “We should have been free to open — but there was no reopening allowed for a religious organization like ours.”

So just like numerous other churches and religious organizations across the country, Answers in Genesis made First Liberty their first call — and thankfully, both the Creation Museum and the Ark Encounter were able to open shortly thereafter.

Even U.S. military service members aren’t immune to attacks on religious liberty. In a stunning display of anti-religious discrimination, the U.S. Navy recently issued an order which bans all service members from attending church and other religious gatherings indoors — even though other methods of gathering such as



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parties, protests, and mass transit — are allowed.

In response, First Liberty sent a letter to the United States Navy on behalf of active duty officer Daniel Schultz and numerous other service members across the nation asking the U.S. Navy to grant an accommodation so that they may attend indoor religious services.

From the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic we heard government officials at every level repeat some version of the mantra “the *first* priority of government is protecting the health and safety of the citizens.”

For example, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy when asked by Fox News host Tucker Carlson how he could justify the arrest of 15 men attending the funeral of a Rabbi replied, “That’s above my paygrade Tucker; I wasn’t thinking of the Bill of Rights when we did this...”

And that’s the problem! The first priority, in fact the justification for the existence of government, is to protect the God-given *rights* of the people.

Of course, government is charged with protecting the health and safety of the citizens; but it must be done, as all government action, within the parameters of the Constitution. First Liberty Institute and our volunteer attorney network have taken elected officials to court all over the country to hold them to this standard.

What has also become clear in recent months is how some in government are willing to demand constitutional protections be enforced or abandoned depending on the subject matter. When business owners peacefully assembled to protest against the government imposed lockdown they were called everything from “selfish” to “domestic terrorists” and accused of valuing money over the lives of others.

But when protests over the death of George Floyd broke out in cities across the country, no such concern

over public health could be heard. It was exactly the opposite response. Over 1000 public health professionals signed on to a letter specifically calling for governments not to use concern over the spread of COVID 19 to stop protest marches and other demonstrations:

“However, as public health advocates, we do not condemn these gatherings as risky for COVID-19 transmission. We support them as vital to the national public health and to the threatened health specifically of Black people in the United States. We can show that support by facilitating safest protesting practices without detracting from demonstrators’ ability to gather and demand change. **This should not be confused with a permissive stance on all gatherings, particularly protests against stay-home orders.**” (emphasis added)

The last sentence of that letter means either the virus can distinguish between protestors based on the issue they’re protesting or these public health officials care more about virtue signaling and adherence to political ideology than the public health.

Any American with a modicum of morality and respect for justice in a civil society was appalled at what happened to George Floyd. That same sense of morality and respect for justice is what causes many to recoil at the sight of violent arsonists and thieves masquerading as protestors attempting to cloak their crimes in lawful activity.

Many Americans are rightly perplexed by government officials who tell them they must sit at home instead of going to their house of wor-

ship while thousands march shoulder to shoulder in city streets across the country.

Faithful Americans reacted to initial restrictions due to COVID-19 with the same willingness to limit their activities as everyone else. Now, they simply want their freedom to attend houses of worship treated equally with the freedom to attend peaceful protests or to go to a casino — both of which have been deemed by some governors as more essential. That disparity must end.



As one federal judge observed, “Government does not have carte blanche, even in a pandemic, to pick and choose which First Amendment rights are ‘open’ and which remain ‘closed.’”

The discrimination against houses of worship by governors and local officials across the nation has been appalling. Worse yet, this inconsistent application of the First Amendment can only exacerbate the division and strife that already plague our nation. The beauty of the First Amendment is in its protection of all religion, speech, press, and peaceful assemblies equally, without any regard to the popularity of the ideas. If our republic is to survive we must hold ourselves and those we entrust with power to the same principled standard. 