



State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
STATE CAPITOL
Santa Fé

Open Letter to Backing the Blue

October 2, 2020

Dear New Mexico Backing the Blue:

The entire House Republican Caucus is pleased to respond to your recent inquiries regarding legislators' views on a number of topics important to Law Enforcement professionals and the communities they serve. We also thank every New Mexico law enforcement officer for their service to our state and to their local communities across the Land of Enchantment.

We believe there is no issue as important as supporting our Law Enforcement professionals who risk their lives daily to keep our communities and families safe and secure. We fundamentally reject any effort by either the State Legislature or local governments to defund Law Enforcement agencies. Such action during a time when New Mexico is struggling to reduce violent crime is irresponsible and will only further put both law enforcement officers and the general public in greater danger. Rather than trying to defund law enforcement agencies, public officials should be reassuring law enforcement agencies of their commitment to maintaining, if not increasing, funding in order to provide sufficient resources to fight New Mexico's unacceptable crime problem.

We are also committed to opposing any legislative effort that would adversely impact Law Enforcement's ability to hire and maintain a qualified and effective workforce. Please be assured that we support Qualified Immunity in its present form. However, we do support efforts to reform any system that inadvertently prevents the discipline of law enforcement officers who violate rules and procedures associated with their jobs. The burden your officers carry in performing their jobs is heavy, and it would be unjust to impose further requirements that are unduly burdensome or render the job impossible to perform.

Every member of the House Republican Caucus is well aware of the current anti-police environment that has been created by radical activists and some sympathetic public officials who are bent on undermining one of the most honorable professions within our society. We are shocked and frustrated to see outstanding police and sheriff departments both in New Mexico and across the country being placed on the defensive to justify actions and policies that are clearly intended to reduce crime and apprehend those who are breaking the law. We are further saddened to learn of low morale in many law enforcement agencies and the high retirement rates that are adversely affecting police and sheriff departments in our communities.

Rather than tearing down the exceptional and selfless efforts of Law Enforcement, we are committed to reassuring law enforcement officers and their families that we support and applaud them for dedicating so much of their lives towards helping others and protecting our way of life. The terms "Thin Blue Line" and "To Serve and Protect" must once again be recognized as meaningful ideas that not only honor the commitment of those who place their lives on the line daily, but those words also need to be echoed more often by the general public to truly show appreciation for Law Enforcement's tireless efforts.

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We realize that with all of the negative publicity currently seen on nightly newscasts about police actions and all of the civil unrest, it can easily be felt that the American people no longer support their local law enforcement agencies. We reject that view, and we hope every law enforcement officer understands that the vast, vast majority of Americans support their hard work and dedication. We solemnly believe that nearly all Americans realize that effective law enforcement is necessary to defend their God-given rights, to protect their property and way of life and, most of all, to keep their children and loved ones safe. The concepts of civilization and a just society cannot exist without Law Enforcement, and we are proud and honored to back your efforts.

Lastly, we recognize that criminal justice reforms implemented in our state, while often well intentioned, can sometimes negatively impact law enforcement officers' ability to do their jobs safely. Recent legislative and constitutional changes have undoubtedly made New Mexico a more dangerous place to work and raise a family. Catch-and-release policies unnecessarily put officers and the general public in harm's way. Therefore, we commit to working to undo any policy that has inadvertently made our state a more dangerous place to live. We are also committed to promoting policies that keep the most dangerous offenders off our streets.

We look forward to working with NM Backing the Blue in the future to ensure the concerns and problems facing Law Enforcement are addressed in a fair and equitable manner. Thank you again for your service and commitment.

Respectfully yours,

House Republican Caucus