

# WPPA: Statement following shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha

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(MADISON, Wis.) – Following the shooting of Jacob Blake by officers in Kenosha, the executive director of the Wisconsin Professional Police Association (WPPA), Jim Palmer, issued this statement:

While the WPPA represents more than 10,000 members from over 300 local association affiliates, the officers in the Kenosha Police Department are not among them. The WPPA's legal and field staff are not involved in the investigation being conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Justice, and as such, we are limited as to what we can say about the incident at this early stage of the investigation.

On behalf of Wisconsin's law enforcement community, our hearts go all those impacted by the shooting of Jacob Blake. We recognize the pain that this incident has caused Mr. Blake and his family, and we hope he makes a full recovery. We also want to acknowledge the legitimate concerns of those that are troubled by the actions depicted in the traumatic bystander video of the incident. We understand how the video is emblematic of an experience that is familiar to many Americans of color, and we regret the hurt that this incident and those like it continue to inflict.

To all those so affected by Mr. Blake's shooting, please know that your voices, your questions, and your lives matter. The WPPA supports your right to have your questions answered as soon as possible to the greatest extent possible. Wisconsin led the way when it became the first state in the nation to mandate the independent investigation by an outside agency any time a serious use of force incident such as this occurs. We urge the public to respect this independent process before rendering judgment. Little can be gained from painting law enforcement with a broad brush, as some have done – including Gov. Evers. While we respect the

concerns that exist about policing, we hope the pursuit of social justice does not come at the expense of procedural justice.

As Wisconsin's largest law enforcement group, we have a long history of undertaking and supporting efforts to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the communities it serves. For that reason, we wholeheartedly support Gov. Evers' decision to call a special session of the legislature to begin addressing these issues. We also support the formation of a task force by Assembly Speaker Robin Vos to focus on these issues from a broader, more systemic perspective. The approaches outlined by Gov. Evers and Robin Vos are not mutually exclusive and they both warrant serious consideration. We share the urgency expressed by the governor and we respect the long-term view advanced by the speaker. We urge these leaders to support one another and their distinctive strategies to affect meaningful change. Doing so will depend upon their ability to bring people together, the fair exercise of judgment, and a genuine dedication to achieving the kind of progress that will protect our citizens as well as the dedicated men and women that work to keep them safe.