

"Representing New Orleans' Finest

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Jeff Landry Attorney General Louisiana Department of Justice

Sir,

In the last 7 years, a variety of adverse circumstances has rendered the New Orleans Police Department less than capable of performing the public safety service that it has historically provided. This decline in service has become pronounced and measurably undeniable. The city's administration, chiefly responsible for the adverse conditions that were the impetus for this deterioration, has over the past three years attempted to reverse the trend through a series of desperate strategies. Most of the operational plans involved partnering with other police agencies having mutual, overlapping, or concurrent jurisdiction. Some have involved just extending traditional jurisdictional boundaries while others, such as with the Louisiana State Police, included a full complement of fulltime troopers assigned to full patrol and response duties in the Vieux Carre, Central Business District, Warehouse District, and some contiguous areas. In addition, off-duty security details and even non-commissioned "patrol" personnel were attempted. These efforts have been marginally successful in some instances and abject failures in others. Overall, an increase in shootings, both fatal and non-fatal, armed robberies, and poor response times for calls for service, speak for themselves. In conjunction with a 500-officer staffing deficit and a labor intensive federal Consent Decree, and poor retention efforts, the likelihood of any significant improvement without a departure from the failed strategies of the last three years is remote.

That said, I was heartened to learn of your concern and attendant contribution of several teams of investigators to our compliment of enforcement officers. While it remains my belief that the only lasting and durable public safety improvement strategy lies in the resurrection of operational staffing levels to the NOPD, coupled with a significant departure from the traditional and obsolete deployment patterns in effect, the attention of your office and personnel is welcomed.

There has been some criticism regarding an alleged lack of "coordination" between the agents of your office and the NOPD, and even some concerns about the choice of uniform with issues of recognition. I would ask that you consider those criticisms to be both frivolous and specious. The variety of uniforms worn by officers invited to work in New Orleans has always been quite varied and had never proven to be an issue of concern. Further, the degree of coordination that is implied to be in place for other agencies is exaggerated. While any covert operation should be conducted with the express knowledge and cooperation of the NOPD, I am confident your office and agents are trained sufficiently to distinguish those events from typical uniform citizen interaction.

Again, your attention and contribution to the violent crime problem is both appreciated and welcomed. Please let me know if the Police Association of New Orleans can be of assistance.

Mike Glasser

President,

Police Association of New Orleans

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