



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins

JACK M. MARTINS August 3, 2016

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I was happy to see summer finally arrive. The kids were home, the weather perfect, and my garden was in full swing. Best of all, I got to be a part of your neighborhood fireworks and cookouts. I guess I was cruising right along until all hell broke loose.

We had the senseless massacre of five Dallas police officers, followed by the execution of three more police officers in Baton Rouge, followed by the ambush of a Milwaukee officer in his car. Now two more have been shot in San Diego! Where does it end?

These outrageous acts bewilder the vast majority of peace-loving Americans. Hateful people on the fringe may have hijacked our country and our national discourse but I can tell you that everyday people are fed up and disgusted by it. And one thing has been made especially clear to me as I speak with neighbors from around the district: Nobody will tolerate violence toward our police officers.

You see, for most people of good sense, the premise is very simple. Police officers are employed by the citizenry, empowered by the social contract that we, the people, design. They are here to protect and to serve with our explicit permission and blessing. If you disagree with that, you disagree with most of your neighbors and society at large. To be sure, you are absolutely free to do so. But, if you attack those police officers, treat them with

malice, or cause them any harm whatsoever – you specifically do so to us, your neighbors, the very society of which you are a part. That cannot and should not be tolerated.

Make no mistake, there are legitimate claims of police brutality that must be addressed. But those must be exposed and punished via peaceful, civil discourse and the legal system. Under no circumstances is the killing of innocent people acceptable. The killing of police officers is especially heinous as it also represents the breakdown of law and order. Targeting them for violence hampers their ability and their desire to do good police work - to make decisions that protect our families and communities. It also discourages good men and women from wanting to serve in an otherwise already dangerous, often underappreciated position. Ultimately, this eventually leads to less qualified police, worse community relations, and less safety for all of us.

I know full well that there are callous and hateful people in the world and that there always will be. But what truly disturbs me more is the ongoing rationalization for violence I see being made by our elected officials. Almost daily, I am dismayed by their mincing of words and semantics. Rather than vigorously calling for peace they choose to somehow justify the violence against police as “understandable” and “predictable.” They offer sympathy but simultaneously take the opportunity to criticize police, somehow trying to explain the violence and the ambushes. I ask you plainly: How hard is it to just condemn it? Whatever happened to unvarnished civility and morality? At the risk of sounding cliché, there are lots of people just like me, who were raised by people who had simple, clear definitions of right and wrong. Killing innocent people is wrong. Killing and attacking police officers is despicable. It is never “understandable,” and should never be “predictable.” It’s simple. Case closed.

Given the incredible strife our country is facing, steady and dedicated policing is imperative. This is no time for moral equivocation from our leaders whose ethical

compasses are being guided by poll numbers. In that light I want our police to know with certainty that there are still officials and many, many good people who stand firmly by them and will defend them. Be safe and continue to rise above the noise and the din because this country very much needs you!