

July 29, 2020

Sheriff Shrader and members of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office,

During this challenging time, we want to take a moment to express our gratitude to the women and men in the Jeffco Sheriff's Office ("JCSO") who serve our community in good faith and with professionalism and excellence. We believe you represent the finest Sheriff's Office in the State of Colorado.

For many, law enforcement is a life-long calling to serve and protect. Every day, deputies place themselves in harm's way to safeguard our community. You have sworn an oath to protect and serve, which is grounded in JCSO core values of integrity, excellence, and respect.

This has been a challenging time for many reasons. You are serving on the frontlines during a contagious, deadly pandemic. We recognize that health and safety for your families must be a priority as you also balance every day demands with new responsibilities and limited resources.

The murder of Mr. George Floyd also has shaken us all to our core. Sadly, events such as the murder of Mr. Floyd have happened too often throughout our nation's history. From peaceful protestors to concerned citizens, each one of us is asking how we can best work together to ensure this never happens in our community – or anywhere else – again.

We share Sheriff Shrader's on-going commitment to instilling a culture within the JCSO that is free of racial bias and emphasizes training on anti-bias policing, de-escalation strategies, and mental health awareness. These efforts and others underscore our collective desire for continuous improvement to eliminate gaps in policies that contribute to racism and discrimination of all kinds. JCSO national accreditation serves as the hallmark of a professional and accountable agency, including high standards for the care and custody of inmates. Despite these important efforts, we also know there is much more work to do, including improving diversity in hiring and leadership not only in JCSO but county-wide.

We stand behind JCSO employees who act in good faith; consistent with Senate Bill 217, we will provide a defense and indemnification for lawsuits brought against the Sheriff and JCSO employees. In the rare case where a deputy is criminally convicted for the conduct from which the claims arise, the Board cannot indemnify or defend such conduct.

Together, we will ensure Jefferson County is an inclusive, vibrant community where everyone feels welcome, safe, and valued. But this work cannot be in words only or done in isolation; nor is the work limited to only law enforcement. It affects all aspects of the county's work – both internally and externally. It means having uncomfortable conversations and opening our hearts to truly listen and act upon the critical concerns that come our way. Thank you for your commitment to work with us toward these goals, and for your service and dedication to Jefferson County.

With appreciation,
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Lesley Dahlkemper, Chair

Casey Tighe

Libby Szabo