

July 24, 2019

Dear State Attorney Brad King,

We are community organization members, faith leaders, and advocates for a fair criminal justice and law enforcement system in Lake County and across the state of Florida. We recently learned about the [Plainview Project](#) which exposed [racist and violent social media posts](#) of current and former Lake County sheriff's deputies. The revelation is especially devastating in light of Lake County's history of racism and brutality at the hands of those with power and authority.

It was not so long ago that Black residents lived in [fear of lynchings](#) by those with power and authority in the community. It was not so long ago that this community endured the reign of terror of Sheriff McCall, who terrorized Black Lake County residents with impunity. It was here that, while transporting them to a court hearing, [Sheriff McCall shot two of the "Groveland Boys"](#) (killing Samuel Shepherd and seriously injuring Walter Irvin), young Black men who had been falsely accused of raping a white woman. Sheriff McCall had served for seven years when he killed Samuel Shepherd in cold blood; he went on to serve as sheriff for 21 more years after that. We want to believe that those days are far behind us. Seeing posts by local law enforcement that demean others based on race and religion, or glorify violence in the carrying out of their duties, is more than cause for concern: it is a source of fear that, despite our best efforts, we have not moved beyond our painful past. It threatens to further erode trust in those who are tasked with the duty of protecting and serving our community.

We know that these dangerous posts don't represent the views of every officer on the force. That's not the point. This moment, and the lessons it can teach us, should not be swept under the rug or ignored as the actions of "a few bad apples." **IT IS THE STATE ATTORNEY'S JOB TO DEFEND THE INTEGRITY OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.**

As State Attorney, you should publicly condemn these remarks and the officers who made them. But that is not enough. We need a clear action that holds law enforcement accountable, makes clear that this conduct will not be tolerated, and encourages public trust in our criminal justice system.

THAT IS WHY WE ASK YOU TO ESTABLISH A "NO CALL" LIST

(SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS A BRADY LIST OR EXCLUSION LIST) FOR OFFICERS WHO EXHIBIT RACIST OR VIOLENT VIEWS. Those kind of views call into question an officer's ability to do his or her work in an unbiased manner that prosecutors can rely upon, from making charging decisions to calling officers as witnesses in trials. For this reason, you should establish a public list of officers whom your office will not call on or rely on to prosecute cases because of their violation of the public trust. A criminal prosecution has an on the accused, on the victim, on the community. We must ensure that our community has absolute confidence in the integrity of officers who may be called upon to determine those outcomes.

ESTABLISHING A NO CALL POLICY IS AN ESSENTIAL STEP TO REPAIRING THE COMMUNITY'S TRUST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT.

We must be able to have confidence in the veracity and impartiality of every officer the prosecutor relies on in pursuing a conviction. As State Attorney, you are uniquely positioned to safeguard that integrity. By establishing a No Call policy, you will send a strong message that you are willing to protect residents of Lake County (and other counties in the Fifth Judicial Circuit) against police officers who are biased and unreliable, thereby restoring public trust in the cases brought by your office.

In other cities, **prosecutors** have already **established No Call Lists** in response to other investigations **uncovering racist and violent social media posts** of police officers. Earlier this year, a group of **59 criminal justice leaders, including former and current prosecutors**, came out in support of the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's use of an exclusion list as best practice.

State Attorney King, we call on you to support a similar effort that holds officers accountable and serves as a deterrent to a racist and violent culture within our law enforcement. We urgently ask you to protect the integrity of the criminal justice system and ensure that racism and violence within our law enforcement truly is a thing of the past.

Sincerely,



THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FLORIDA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The Rev. Raymond Johnson, *Coordinator Cooperative Baptist Fellowship*

The Rev. Joyce Lieberman, *Executive Presbyter, Synod of the South Atlantic*

The Rev. James T. Golden, Esq., *Social Action Chair, 11th Episcopal District AME*

The Rev. Dr. James T. Morris, *Presiding Elder, Central Florida District of Christian Methodist Episcopal Church*

The Rev. Dr. Russell L. Meyer, *Executive Director, Florida Council of Churches*

The Rev. Dorsey F. Henderson, Jr., *Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina (Retired), Assisting in Diocese of Florida*



Sister Ann Kendrick, *Founder of the HOPE Community Center, Apopka*

