



VALUES STATEMENT RE: Officer Identification

To: Joint Committee On Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform

From: Michael Selvaggio, Oregon Coalition of Police and Sheriffs

Date: July 30, 2020

Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee:

Co-Chair Bynum requested a statement of values from ORCOPS with regard to the identification of officers. ORCOPS is pleased to outline the following values and priorities.

Values

- First, that officers and their families are protected from any unnecessary risk stemming from a method of identification.
- Second, that law enforcement officers on duty are able to be individually identified in a manner that allows for effective reporting of any allegations of misconduct.
- Third, that when not conflicting with the first priority, good community relationships are served by a clear display of officers' names when in uniform.
- Additionally, that there may be limited circumstances in which an officer's duty necessitates that they not be identified as a law enforcement officer, such as undercover operations, and those circumstances are provided for. There may be certain officers who are better able to de-escalate situations in plain clothes, and those options should be provided for.

Exception

ORCOPS members are used to displaying their names on their uniforms in the course of their official duties. However, under certain circumstances, such as emotionally-charged crowd control events, officers have fielded violent threats against their persons and against their households -- fueled by personal information derived from their name tags. In some situations, officers have been taunted with the knowledge of their home address, and some are currently living separated from their families.

ORCOPS requests that officers in crowd control situations be able to utilize an identifier in lieu of their name in circumstances in which their commanding officer determines that display of an

officer's name could result in an undue additional threat to an officer's person or family, pursuant to policy adopted by the employing jurisdiction.

Examples

A simple identifying number can be just as or even more visible than an officers' name, especially if the name is relatively long:



Above, the example Officer Englebert Humperdinck (a real name) has his name legible, but less clear than an identifying number, which would only be used in limited crowd control circumstances. *(Note: To compare, "Humperdinck" is 11 letters; my son's last name is 14 letters plus a hyphen. - Mike)*

Even when written the full breadth across a chest, the numeric identifier is clearer, especially in the case of a blurry photograph. Additionally, the obtaining of a partial identification would still be easily resolvable to a particular officer. (I.e: If the example was identified as "P-1-2-blank")



In sum, ORCOPS' proposal and values maintain that (non-undercover) law enforcement officers on duty are able to be individually identified in a manner that allows for effective reporting of any misconduct.