



Van H. Wanggaard

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STATEMENT ON SHOOTING IN KENOSHA

“The video of a Kenosha Police Officer shooting Jacob Blake appears shocking.

“Although the video that is publicly available at this time provides a picture of the incident, it is also important to remember that there is a great deal that cannot be seen, and many witnesses who saw the events leading up to and during the event from different perspectives. That is why there should be, and will be, a thorough, independent investigation by the Wisconsin Department of Justice into the shooting of Mr. Blake. If the independent investigation shows the shooting to be unjustified, people will be held accountable.

“Exhale. Everyone should take a deep breath. There is an investigatory process that must be followed, so no evidence is overlooked. We must let law and reason, not emotion, guide the next steps. I know passions and tensions are high right now between certain communities and law enforcement. It’s important to realize that tension goes both ways. Although each situation is unique, it is easy to lump every interaction together when it is the perceived reality you live in. But nothing justifies the violence and destruction we saw last night.

“By improving the accountability of police, by increasing community involvement to promote better understandings between the community and police, and by being as transparent as possible, we can permanently improve the situation and change the narrative to the better. The healing won’t occur overnight, but it can and must be improved by working together.

“I hesitate to do this, because the situation in Kenosha stands on its own, but I am extremely shocked by the content of Governor Evers’ statement last night. The best leaders attempt to diffuse situations, not escalate them. Evers’ statement was irresponsible and inflammatory. He jumped to conclusions without first having all the facts. At a time when stereotyping situations is especially risky, Evers stereotyped every police interaction with people of color - harming both.

Last night, I asked the Governor to provide all necessary assistance to both the city and county of Kenosha, including the National Guard. I was told he was providing such assistance. After the events of yesterday afternoon and Evers’ statement last night, Kenosha will need all the help it can get - especially your prayers.”

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