



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 09-01-2023

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Weaponizing Law Enforcement against Elected and Local Officials

Recently Sheriff Dale Schmidt received phone calls from officials regarding allegations made on a social media page and a political website by Dodge County Supervisor Dan Siegmann. The allegations made include alleged violations of law by numerous members of the county board and other local officials and that action was not taken by law enforcement officials in response. Subsequently, the sheriff did research into the allegations and found that those allegations are the very same allegations that have already been thoroughly investigated. They were also found to have zero merit according to the law. Claims were also made that no communication was provided back to Mr. Siegmann, which is clearly inaccurate as the Green Lake County District Attorney's Office sent a letter to his home providing a finding of one investigation and another by former Dodge County District Attorney Kurt Klomberg regarding the findings of another investigation.

The purpose of this release is to inform the public of facts that are not being presented by Mr. Siegmann. From his perspective, we understand that he believes that violations of law have occurred, however, numerous law enforcement officials and lawyers have reviewed the allegations made and all agree that the complaints have no merit and that no violation of law occurred. It is also concerning that every time a new person enters the Dodge County political arena, if they do not have the same viewpoint as Mr. Siegmann, they seem to become a target for non-stop attacks or a "criminal complaint" by Mr. Siegmann, again all of which have zero merit according to the law. What Mr. Siegmann forgets is that although he makes allegations, everyone, including his political rivals, are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. One person's opinion and interpretation of the law does not necessarily mean a violation of the law occurred. Furthermore, Mr. Siegmann has no authority to issue a criminal complaint as he attempts to do, but that is the job of a professional prosecutor, in this case, the district attorney.

Additionally, it is important for not only the public to understand that there have been no provable violations of law committed regarding any of the allegations made, but it is important for our employees and prospective employees to understand that as well. If we remain silent and do not push back on the false narrative being presented, it certainly casts a negative perception of the county by our residents, a perception that is not factual or warranted. As a result of Mr. Siegmann's public statements, excellent employees of the county who would have otherwise finished their employment with Dodge County, have left and moved on citing statements that Supervisor Siegmann has made publicly. One employee cited to me a statement made last fall during the budget discussion when Supervisor Siegmann told employees that if they don't like it here, they can leave. One outstanding employee told me before he left, "I heard him, and I am doing what he said".

Dodge County is a great place to live, work, and visit, and the focus of our county needs to be on growing our local economy and doing great things for the citizens of our county. Sheriff Schmidt's goal in presenting this information to the public is that the public will see all the facts and make an informed decision to ignore the baseless accusations being made by one supervisor who has either misinterpreted or simply has a basic misunderstanding of how the law is applied.

Accompanying this release is a copy of the investigative report completed by the Dodge County Sheriff's Office and the independent findings of the special prosecutor assigned to review the investigation for your review. Additionally, we are attaching a memo from former District Attorney Kurt Klomberg regarding the disposition of other complaints made by Mr. Siegmann to the former district attorney.

Sheriff Schmidt would like to go on record to say that we will always take the complaint of any citizen and we will investigate if a violation of law has occurred. If it is discovered through that investigation that a prosecution is warranted, we will take the appropriate legal action.

However, if after an investigation is completed, it is determined that no law was violated or no crime can be proven as being violated, we will not participate in a political witch hunt. As evidence of this, we refer you to another investigation that was done involving seemingly political allies of Mr. Siegmann. In that circumstance, it was deemed necessary to request another sheriff's office, under mutual aid, to follow up on a complaint I received from three different sources regarding several county board supervisors attending an unposted "budget" meeting in Ashippun. It was found by that agency and their district attorney that these supervisors were not in violation of open meeting laws at the county board level. It was not found, however, that it did not violate open meetings law at a committee level as that was not fully investigated. It certainly was within my rights to push the issue with the investigating agency to ask for them to expand their search, however, that no doubt would have been viewed as a politically weaponizing law enforcement against political rivals.

It is interesting that most of the involved supervisors in that investigation failed to cooperate, or even respond to the investigator's request for an interview. It is also interesting that political allies, rather than welcoming an investigation to prove innocence, demonized that investigation saying it was inappropriate to pay for that kind of investigation by an outside agency. The sheriff in that county did not charge us to conduct the investigation.

To be clear, if an investigation finds no violation of law, and a citizen is not happy with that finding, Sheriff Schmidt will stand up for the integrity of the investigation. If there are legitimate concerns with the investigation that need to be addressed, he will listen and evaluate. To date, no legitimate concerns have been raised. Sheriff Schmidt will also not bow to political pressure simply because someone wants to see their fellow supervisor arrested. If that means that he will be in political crosshairs because the investigation has not yielded a violation of law, then so be it. The Office of Sheriff in Dodge County will not be utilized as a political weapon against political rivals.

We have all seen and are currently seeing elsewhere in our country where the politicization and weaponization of law enforcement have occurred and unfortunately, some people in positions of authority have not taken a stand against those loud voices who present only the facts that make their case but leave out the facts which vindicate the accused.

In Dodge County, the facts are simple. There is a perception by a very small number of individuals who believe that there is corruption within Dodge County government, and they relay their perspective to the public even though they may not have all the relevant information or relevant information is dismissed without proper consideration. However, the reality is that while from time to time people do make mistakes because we are all human, and those mistakes are addressed, it does not mean that the law was violated or that they deserve criminal prosecution.

It would be a dangerous place to live if every time a politician disagreed with another politician, law enforcement would lock up one side because of a differing opinion or perspective. A question we all should ask of ourselves is “Have I held the people I agree with to the same standard as those I don’t agree with?”

The Dodge County Sheriff’s Office has a culture of holding people accountable and we will continue to do so, not based on someone’s political witch hunt, but based on facts that are substantiated by evidence.

Questions may be directed to Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt

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