

JOINT STATEMENT FROM ELECTED PROSECUTORS ON REJECTING LAW ENFORCEMENT UNION CAMPAIGN ENDORSEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Across the country, ongoing protests against police brutality and racial oppression have sent a loud and clear message that change is needed. Protesters have drawn critical attention to a criminal legal system that has caused immense pain and injustice and does not even aim to keep all of us safe. More importantly, these protests have forced us to reckon with our responsibility to build trust between our communities and those operating within this system. As key actors in that system, we cannot cling to the status quo and pretend there are no issues with the way things have been done. We need to change by separating ourselves from law enforcement unions.*

As prosecutors, we play a fundamental role in the criminal legal system. How we act in that role affects both how the system operates and [how people perceive](#) how the system operates. Because of this, regardless of our actions in the past, we are [joining others](#) in committing that we will not accept campaign endorsements or contributions from police unions going forward.

Campaign endorsements and contributions send a message. They tell citizens that the candidate—in this case, a prosecutor seeking election—aligns with the values and interests of the donor or endorser. And they create a perceived (if not actual) impression that the elected official is beholden to that group. So what are the values and interests of police unions that elected prosecutors will be perceived as aligning with?

In recent weeks, police unions have been the [most vocal opponents](#) of reasonable reforms and necessary changes. It has become increasingly clear that — despite what they might say — the interest being advanced by police unions is not the safety of our communities, but rather protecting themselves and [maintaining](#) the harmful, broken criminal legal system. We cannot accept that and we will not be tied, or perceived as beholden, to it.

Further, we cannot ignore the [conflict of interest](#) that these campaign contributions create. We cannot ignore the reasonable skepticism our communities have about our ability to objectively review an instance of police misconduct because we accepted political and financial support from the organization representing the person whose conduct is under review. When police misconduct occurs, it is our responsibility to consider those cases with the same objectivity and analysis we apply to any other case. We recognize now that being on the “[political payroll](#)” of police unions is simply inappropriate and unethical.

We hear the resounding calls for us to do better by those we serve. Many steps remain, but one concrete and immediate way we intend to do better is by declining any campaign endorsements or contributions made by a law enforcement union. For us—and for our communities—it just isn't worth it.

**Our use of the term "union" includes any organized association of law enforcement officers, formed to protect and further their rights and interests. Law enforcement unions go by other names, including "federations" and "associations."*