



FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

AKRON LODGE #7

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Statement from Akron FOP

Akron City Councilman Eric Garrett's recent rant against the straight forward proposal to equip Akron patrol officers with standard, department-issued rifles is not just wrong—it's dangerously ignorant and plays politics with officers' lives and community safety.

Mr. Garrett is the same councilman who recently questioned whether taking asbestos out of buildings was really necessary before tearing down those buildings. Now he's lecturing experts on firearms he clearly doesn't remotely understand. Let's be clear: No one in the Akron Police Department is asking for "machine guns" or to "militarize" our streets. Patrol rifles—like standard AR-15 issued by most police departments in the country—are basic, essential tools used by police departments everywhere to match the threats our officers face daily.

In Akron, officers respond to shots-fired calls where rifle casings (from AR-15s or AK-47s carried by criminals) litter the ground. They confront illegally modified handguns with "Glock switches" that actually turn those weapons into fully automatic guns. Does Mr. Garrett think that Akron Police should confront these deadly threats with pepper spray? Right now, if an officer wants a patrol rifle for these real-world dangers, they have to buy it themselves—out of pocket—then get it inspected and qualify annually just to carry it. The city's plan? Finally provide consistent, department-owned rifles so training is uniform, accountability is tighter, and officers aren't stuck footing the bill for gear they need to survive. That's not militarization; that's common sense.

Mr. Garrett tries to tie this to the tragic death of 15-year-old Jazmir Tucker, claiming "proactive police reform" could have saved him. That's a cheap, misleading shot. A grand jury reviewed the facts and cleared the officer. That officer believed Tucker had just fired a weapon linked to other shootings and was reaching for it. Tucker was carrying an illegal semiautomatic firearm and didn't comply with officer commands. Tragedies like this demand real accountability—from criminals who arm kids, from those who flood our streets with illegal guns and drugs, and yes, from anyone who terrorizes neighborhoods. Pointing fingers only at police while ignoring the actual causes is cheap politics, plain and simple. It dishonors the officers who risk everything to protect this city and fuels division.

Our members aren't politicians—they're the men and women who run toward gunfire, so residents don't have to. They deserve better than baseless attacks from a councilman more interested in headlines than facts. Mr. Garrett's inflammatory rhetoric doesn't make Akron safer; it endangers officers by questioning the very tools that could help them go home to their families safely.

Akron deserves leaders who put safety first—not political theater.

Brian Lucey
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