



July 8, 2016

For immediate release

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Statement of President Steven Casstevens In Response to Killing of Police in Dallas

Today we stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in law enforcement throughout the country, but especially in Dallas, where five officers were killed in the line of duty last night and more were shot and wounded.

I am asking all sworn officers in Illinois to wear their mourning bands on their badges from now until the day of the funeral(s) of the fallen officers, in honor of the lives lost in Dallas.

These officers died while protecting and facilitating our nation's bedrock principles – freedom of speech and, ironically, the freedom to assemble peaceably. Yesterday these officers left home to protect their fellow citizens, and tragically, they never returned to their families.

While we mourn the loss of five police officers in Dallas, we are also mindful of the pain that this tragedy brings to our police families here in Illinois. We know that as police officers hit the street today in their respective communities, they do so with heavy hearts and with a heightened awareness of the potential dangers that exist. We are thinking about these brave men and women today and their families as well as we cope with this tragedy. These Illinois officers are public servants and a force for the public good, fostering safe communities and doing their best to keep our citizens safe. We are undeterred in going to work every day, including today, to protect our citizens.

We are painfully aware of the current well-publicized tensions between police and some members of our communities. So we must continue to build trust, most often out of the spotlight and out of the news, and not let these events divide us.

Also, I want to remind our members that our Psychological Services Committee, chaired by Chief Pam Church of Western Springs, encourages chiefs and officers to be mindful of police-friendly therapists (they have a list) who are happy to provide assistance. The committee also encourages peer support and 24/7 peer support programs. Chief Church can be reached at 708.246.1800 ext. 153 (office) or 708.514.1501 (cell).

Chief Steven Casstevens is president of the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police and Chief of Police in Buffalo Grove, Illinois.