

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

March 15, 2024

Dear Governor Walz,

On behalf of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association (MPPOA) and the Minnesota State Patrol Troopers Association, and pursuant to Minnesota Statute § 8.01, we write to formally and respectfully request that the case *State of Minnesota v. Ryan Patrick Londregan* (Prosecutor Case No. 23A11299) be removed from the Hennepin County Attorney's Office ("HCAO") immediately and that the Minnesota Attorney General's Office assume responsibility for the case. As current and former law-enforcement officers, and as a former prosecutor and defense lawyer, we understand this is an uncommon request. It is our sincere belief that if fair prosecutors review the case, they will determine that it should be dismissed with prejudice.

On July 31, 2023, Ricky Cobb II, a repeated convicted felon, wanted for a felony order for protection violation, and in possession of a loaded gun, was killed as he attempted to speed away with Minnesota State Patrol Trooper Brett Seide almost entirely in the driver's side of the car with the door open, consequently putting two Minnesota State Troopers (i.e., Troopers Seide and Londregan) in immediate jeopardy of life and/or serious bodily injury from being dragged by the vehicle. The time between when Trooper Londregan reached for his sidearm and he fired was approximately 3.5 seconds.

Every reasonable person would conclude the shooting was authorized, it was justified, and it was necessary. And for those with the specialized knowledge gained through actual experience in law enforcement, that conclusion is inescapable. Indeed, as recent court filings reveal, the HCAO's own hand-picked, independent use-of-force expert, Jeffrey Noble, told the Hennepin County Attorney and six other members of the HCAO in *October 2023* that Trooper Londregan reasonably believed that Trooper Seide was in danger of death or great bodily harm and that his use of deadly force to save his fellow Trooper was reasonable under the circumstances. And Mr. Noble was no stranger to the HCAO or to Minnesota prosecutors—among the hundreds of times he has been retained in use-of-force matters, he worked with the HCAO in the George Floyd case and with the Ramsey County Attorney's Office in the Philando Castille case, opining in both instances that the use of force was unreasonable and unnecessary.

But despite having announced to the press and public that Mr. Noble's independent analysis would be "critical" to the charging decision, the Hennepin County Attorney did not heed Mr. Noble's guidance. Worse, public filings show that the Hennepin County Attorney did more than ignore Mr. Noble, but actively sought to bury Mr. Noble's opinion and excluded Mr. Noble from the process entirely. After hearing Mr. Noble's supposedly "preliminary" analysis, the HCAO did not supply Mr. Noble with grand jury transcripts despite committing to do so, charged Trooper Londregan with *murder* apparently without further consultation with their own "critical"

expert, and only then directed Mr. Noble to cease working (i.e., to not create a final report). The HCAO then unsuccessfully sought to block public access to all filings and institute a gag order on the defense before providing any discovery. And once Mr. Noble's opinion became public, the HCAO responded to justified criticism by claiming to the press that Mr. Noble's opinion was merely preliminary and based on an incomplete record because Mr. Noble did not have the very grand jury transcripts that the HCAO withheld from him.

The only rational explanation for this conduct is that the HCAO understood that Mr. Noble's opinion had not and would not change based on the supposed evidence gathered following the October 2023 meeting. So, rather than fairly and honestly evaluating *all* the evidence, including the analysis of their "critical" expert, the HCAO decided to (1) manufacture a basis, no matter how flimsy, to bring the charges they intended to bring from the very start; and (2) to minimize the chance that Noble's analysis could be used against them. This is not justice. And this is only the beginning, as Trooper Londregan is presently seeking to compel the HCAO to produce additional *Brady* material that the HCAO *continues* to fight to withhold.

The law-enforcement community is united in outrage over this ongoing abuse. Over a hundred current and former state troopers—on their own initiative—attended Trooper Londregan's first appearance on January 29, 2024 in solidarity.¹ Other prominent members of the law enforcement community have taken the rare step of speaking out publicly, including Farmington, Minnesota Police Chief Gary Rutherford² and State Patrol Chaplain Col. John Morris.³

Law enforcement in Minnesota, and especially in Hennepin County, is in a state of crisis. Minneapolis Police have lost 40% of their membership since 2020 and are facing enormous challenges in hiring,⁴ and they are not alone. It is no secret to our membership what the source of the issue is. There is a crisis of confidence in the elected leadership who are supposed to be partners in making our communities safer, but instead seek to score political points through charging every police officer whom circumstances compel to use deadly force, regardless of the evidence. This distrust is magnified by the contrast between how elected leadership speaks about law enforcement in the wake of tragedies like the recent slayings of two police officers and a firefighter paramedic in Burnsville and how they attack officers who act reasonably to defend themselves and their fellow officers from imminent threats to their lives, as recently discussed by police leadership in both Minnesota⁵ and Wisconsin.⁶

It is imperative to public safety that officers throughout our State know they can do their jobs without the fear of biased and unfair prosecution. Our officers are dedicated and selfless people who have labored under this specter for too long—and it is reflected in the difficulty that

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/trooper-ryan-londregan-1st-court-appearance-ricky-cobb-killing/>

² https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0365kVHsN9dCWPPRSWtyBoJryCF9QZ4WipovHymqfhqaCcLdkMVRjhWp6Md4YnURhsl&id=61557355854471&paipv=0&eav=AfbU1hCGNWuf_3mM1nCTDRZNI_EvWa7valrvv1agDiAu66JKCd_4RC0TaBEgbVIQ3ll0&_rdr

³ <https://alphanews.org/exclusive-state-patrol-chaplain-speaks-out-in-support-of-trooper-ryan-londregan/>

⁴ <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/minneapolis-launches-1-million-police-recruitment-campaign/>

⁵ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0365kVHsN9dCWPPRSWtyBoJryCF9QZ4WipovHymqfhqaCcLdkMVRjhWp6Md4YnURhsl&id=61557355854471&paipv=0&eav=AfbU1hCGNWuf_3mM1nCTDRZNI_EvWa7valrvv1agDiAu66JKCd_4RC0TaBEgbVIQ3ll0&_rdr

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=366366156323985&ref=sharing>

Minneapolis and other locales have experienced in recruiting and retaining police. There can be no mistake, the threat of politically motivated prosecution “justified” through Monday-morning quarterbacking and sidelining all contrary evidence (including “critical” analysis from independent use-of-force experts) *gets officers killed* and makes *everyone* less safe.

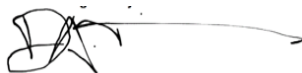
That said, this letter is not a request for broad policy changes. We ask only that you immediately redress an ongoing miscarriage of justice affecting one of our members through the powers granted to you by Minnesota statute—powers you have utilized in other cases.⁷ Nor is this a request for special treatment or a double standard in favor of our members—the Minnesota Attorney General can hardly be accused of a bias in favor of law enforcement.

Trooper Londregan, like any Minnesotan accused of a crime, deserves to have any possible charges considered by a prosecutor concerned with justice, not a personal political agenda. The Hennepin County Attorney’s Office has, unfortunately, destroyed any semblance of trust that once existed between them, our members, and the broader public. We pray that you will take decisive action, as you have before, to restore public confidence in the criminal justice process.

Sincerely,



Brian Peters
Executive Director, MPPOA



David Titus
President, MPPOA



Imran Ali
General Counsel, MPPOA

Mike LeDoux

Mike LeDoux
President
Minnesota State Patrol Trooper Association

CC:
Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan
Attorney General Keith Ellison

⁷ <https://mn.gov/governor/newsroom/press-releases/?id=1055-572824> (Zaria McKeever case);
<https://www.fox9.com/news/minnesota-governor-puts-ag-ellison-in-charge-of-george-floyd-case>