



NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH TRAGEDY IN FLORIDA

Alexandria, VA – For nearly four decades, the Neighborhood Watch Program (housed within the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)) has worked to unite law enforcement agencies, private organizations, and individual citizens in a nation-wide effort to reduce crime and improve local communities.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Watch Program is to enable citizens to act as the “eyes and ears” within their community and alert law enforcement immediately when they notice suspicious activity. However, the Neighborhood Watch Program does not in any way, shape, or form advocate citizens to take the law in their own hands. The success of the program has established Neighborhood Watch as the nation’s premier crime prevention and community mobilization program. Visible signs of the program are seen throughout America on street signs, window decals, community block parties and service projects.

“The alleged action of a “self-appointed neighborhood watchman” last month in Sanford, FL significantly contradicts the principles of the Neighborhood Watch Program,” stated NSA Executive Director Aaron D. Kennard, Sheriff (ret.). “NSA has no information indicating the community where the incident occurred has ever even registered with the NSA Neighborhood Watch program.”

“The Neighborhood Watch Program fosters collaboration and cooperation with the community and local law enforcement by encouraging citizens to be aware of what is going on in their communities and contact law enforcement if they suspect something – NOT take the law in their own hands,” continued Executive Director Kennard. “The alleged participant ignored everything the Neighborhood Watch Program stands for and it resulted in a young man losing his life. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Trayvon Martin during this terrible time.”

National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) is one of the largest associations of law enforcement professionals in the United States, representing more than 3,000 elected sheriffs across the nation, and a total membership of more than 20,000. NSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising the level of professionalism among sheriffs, their deputies, and others in the field of criminal justice and public safety. Throughout its seventy-two year history, NSA has served as an information clearinghouse for sheriffs, deputies, chiefs of police, other law enforcement professionals, state governments and the federal government. For more information on the NSA and the Neighborhood Watch Program, please visit www.sheriffs.org.

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