



January 9, 2026 – (Alexandria, VA) The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) Executive Director and CEO Justin Smith released the following statement regarding the incident in Minnesota earlier this week.

'What happened this past week in Minnesota was a tragedy and should have been prevented. Everyone must remain calm, and both sides should tone down the rhetoric and accusations. Getting further divided will not make our communities safer.

Sheriffs are keepers of the peace in their counties and upholders of the rule of law; as such, we seek to protect peace officers from injury in the furtherance of their lawful duties, while also working to avoid the use of force by peace officers against citizens whenever it can be reasonably prevented.

We have a system of justice in this country, both civil and criminal, which guarantees due process after careful evaluation of all evidence before conclusions or judgements are reached. Law enforcement officers are entitled to due process just as anyone accused of wrongdoing.

Sheriffs believe in due process and thorough investigations. Our criminal justice system is not designed to bring about instantaneous justice one way or the other. Also, the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment confirms the right of citizens to peaceably assemble and to petition the government for a redress of their grievances; it does not confer the right to obstruct or interfere with government operations.

America's Sheriffs call on our public officials and leaders to refrain from the use of language or rhetoric that may incite more anger or violence. Rather, ask them to help bring the temperature down and allow for a thorough and objective investigation of the facts that led to this tragic situation. Sheriffs of America will continue to uphold the rule of law in a fair and constitutional manner."

#### **About the National Sheriffs' Association**

The National Sheriffs' Association is one of the largest associations of law enforcement professionals in the U.S., representing more than 3,000 elected Sheriffs across the nation, and with a total membership of approximately 10,000. NSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising the level of professionalism among Sheriffs, their deputies, and others in the field of law enforcement, public safety, and criminal justice. Throughout its eighty-five-year history, NSA has also served as an information resource for all law enforcement, as well as state governments and the federal government.

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