

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

September 6, 2018

### **CARVER COUNTY ATTORNEY MARK METZ AND CHASKA POLICE CHIEF SCOTT KNIGHT ANNOUNCE EXPUNGMENT OF CRIMINAL RECORDS REGARDING HISPANIC DRIVERS TARGETED FOR THEIR RACE.**

Carver County Attorney Mark Metz and Chaska Police Chief Scott Knight jointly announce that forty improper traffic citations have now been expunged (removed) as convictions from the public record. This recommendation serves the interests of justice because of a high likelihood former Chaska Police Officer Josh Lawrenz conducted traffic stops of certain drivers based on their Hispanic race. Such stops based on race violate the Equal Protection Clause under both state and federal constitutions.

The Chaska Police Department previously fired Officer Lawrenz and an arbitrator upheld that termination of employment following a contested hearing in 2016. In part, the arbitrator concluded that Officer Lawrenz had "engaged in racial profiling...of his own volition." County Attorney Metz had previously dismissed all active citations. Upon further review, Attorney Metz determined that it also serves the best interest of justice to dismiss those older traffic convictions that resulted in convictions before Officer Lawrenz was accused of racial profiling. Citing to the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct, County Attorney Metz stated it is a matter of public trust that prosecutions are never pursued due to racial animus.

In addition, Chief Knight remarked that while the Chaska Police Department remains vigorous in enforcing Minnesota law, he will not tolerate discriminatory enforcement of law based on sex, race, age, creed, religion, color, or national origin. Both County Attorney Metz and Chief Knight remarked that both agencies concentrate their law enforcement efforts solely on illegal conduct.

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