

We, the fraternal organizations of this police department, want to acknowledge our full support of Officer Durocher and his actions in the unfortunate situation that he was forced into by the accused, Mr. Ward. We want it fully known that it was the actions of one person, Mr. Ward, on October 29, 2017, that brought us here today

In the interest of fairness, equality and in the keeping of the ideals of 21st Century policing that we believe that as the Head Prosecutor for the City of Portsmouth, the Commonwealth Attorney should recuse herself from this case and all future cases. Many months ago, she recused herself from the prosecution of the armed burglar in this case so that she could focus on the investigation of the officer. The Portsmouth Police Department was told to step out of investigating the shooting, by the Commonwealth, so as to alleviate any fears of bias. She should have stepped out of both cases, to totally alleviate these types of fears.

It is impossible to break the bond that we share with the Commonwealth's Attorney's office especially when they prosecute the cases that we bring to them. It is our position that Mrs. Morales and her office should step out of both cases. This would be fair to both the officer and Mr. Ward.

Our concern is with the amount of time that it has taken for us to get to today. It is our understanding that this investigation, by the Virginia State Police, was turned over to her nearly a year ago. It is further our understanding that there was never a meeting between Mrs. Morales and the Virginia State Police who investigated this case. Since it is apparent that this was to be turned over to the Grand Jury of the City of Portsmouth, we are extremely concerned with the amount of time it took to get to today.

It also appears to us that all incidents involving use of force by police officers are going to the Grand Jury. We only feel that it is right that this process be fair, consistent and timely. It is neither. It is out of the ordinary for the Commonwealth's Attorney's investigator to present any case. Almost every single case presented to the Grand Jury is presented by a Portsmouth Police officer or detective. By presenting this directly from her office, it automatically shows a bias by her office and demonstrates it indirectly to the Grand Jury.

We stand committed, as we are sworn to do, to protect the citizens of Portsmouth, but we need to acknowledge that our safety is imperative. If we are not safe, it is difficult to protect others.