



Member National Council of Negotiation Associations

## WESTERN STATES HOSTAGE NEGOTIATORS' ASSOCIATION

June 19, 2020

Dear Friends,

As your WSHNA President, I want you to know that there are many, many who support you in the important work you do and support who you are as professionals. The past few weeks have been almost surreal for many of you, hearing your professions attacked, being judged without being known, having funding reduced. I will not attempt to justify or explain away the actions of the mindless crowds. However, I would like to remind us all of some things we already know, which might help us make a little more sense of what is going on and realize these personal attacks are really not about us as individuals. Nevertheless, they do feel very personal, even for me as a retired police officer.

What I see when I watch the energy of the crowds is pent up anger and frustration. The George Floyd killing was certainly the spark, but the fuel I believe, is not entirely related to his death. Certainly, there are ways that we still need to address systemic racism in our society, but notice how all the anger is pointed squarely at law enforcement, as if we are the entire system? This is our first clue that this mess is not about us, although we certainly are on the receiving end of the wrath.

Just like we see in some crisis incidents, the issue that causes the incident is often not really the issue. An argument over dropping the kids off late for visitation and which leads to an armed standoff is likely an incident about something else entirely, possibly about a fear of losing identity, control, etc. In our case, I believe there is a great amount of public frustration and anger relating to how our governments have handled the COVID 19 pandemic. So many mixed messages. So many contradicting directives, so many blanket orders that seem to limit our freedoms with very little underlying logic. I say this not to criticize, but to point out the perceptions that lead to this frustration. There is an underlying level of anger and desire to have a restored level of control in our lives. The pot was already at a low simmer, even before the George Floyd incident. Now add in the horrific video of his death, and sincere beliefs that we can do better to address systemic racism, and we have created a flashpoint, a spark to set ablaze smoldering frustrations.

It breaks my heart to see so many of you on the front lines being the targets of this rage. You know it is not about you, but it hurts, nonetheless. I have been super impressed as I have watched from afar the professional way you continue to conduct yourselves, despite the spineless and ridiculous behavior of some of your so-called leaders. Some of you are fortunate to have leaders who are standing by you and encouraging you. Be grateful for that. It seems to be a rare occurrence these days.

Regardless of the level of internal support or lack of it, the shift in public opinion against you is difficult to take. Many feel powerless to do anything about it. Many feel their pride turning to shame. Please remember the profession you chose is a noble one. There truly are many who support you, and they are in the majority. I wish they would speak up more often and more loudly, but I hear from some of them daily.

***WSHNA is on Facebook or [www.wshna.com](http://www.wshna.com) or @WSHNA1  
2416 46<sup>th</sup> AVE SE – PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON 98374-4181***

Please know that your WSHNA Board is here to support you. Take advantage for the free training we offer, training funds and scholarships. But much more than the training support, we want you to know we are proud of you. We believe in you and know the sacrifice you and your families make every day to keep our communities safe. You are the best of the best, do not forget that.

With every new development, please remind yourself that this aggression towards our profession is just where the anger and frustration is focused. Do your best to guard your hearts and your minds and not take it personally. This will pass, and when it does, your agencies will need your calm and level advice on how to move forward and move forward we will. If you ever need to talk or vent, reach out by phone, email, Facebook, or whatever works for you.

Gratefully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Troy D. King". The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light gray rectangular background.

Troy D. King, President