



The Denver Police Protective Association



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Mayor John Hickenlooper
City and County Building
Denver, CO 80204

HAND DELIVERED

Your Honor:

Recent events surrounding the shooting of Paul Childs have caused a considerable amount of concern to the 1,400 members of the Denver Police Protective Association. Our officers are constantly bombarded by the media, members of council, and various local pundits all injecting their oft-times uninformed opinions about how Denver officers should handle tactical situations. The Paul Childs incident is certainly a tragic one that no one wishes to see repeated, however our officers have raised some very serious issues regarding the continued performance of their duties that need to be put forth in this community in an effort to balance this heated discussion. The main issue for our member officers is that they are confused as to what Officer Turney did wrong to deserve this punishment. Manager LaCabe, in his report, cited the use of bad tactics but did not specify what these tactics were. One has to wonder if this situation had turned out differently would these tactics suddenly be good tactics. Our feeling is that if there is a question about tactics, it is a training issue that certainly needs to be addressed by the police administration so that the officers on the street have some clear cut knowledge about how to operate in these situations.

There are other pertinent issues that were brought up at our Friday meeting these were:

- Should the city be held responsible for failure to train officers in handling comparable situations like the Childs shooting?
- If the current policies need to be changed, then why is Officer Turney being disciplined for following existing policies? If he did not follow policies, then what was his violation?
- Should other city agencies be reviewed as to their involvement and handling of individuals similar to Paul Childs? The reference here relates to the inordinate number of calls to the Childs residence prior to the shooting.

- How should officers be advised to handle calls of this nature in the future? Denver area law enforcement was chastised in the Columbine high school incident for allegedly delaying their entry and not taking charge of the situation. Officer Turney is being punished for NOT leaving the scene and taking the action that he was trained to take. This is causing considerable concern to officers who feel that they are merely one call away from a similar situation and could face the same type of discipline for handling it correctly.

The members of the PPA strongly feel that Officer Turney acted appropriately, and within the policy in place at the time of the incident, and that the discipline received is inappropriate and politically motivated. Our members are dedicated city employees who enjoy serving the City of Denver in a professional setting, and also enjoy the support of a vast majority of it's citizens. However, at this juncture they are very confused as to how to proceed, particularly in tactical situations of this nature. The officers of the Denver Police Protective Association want a working environment that provides a high quality of safety services for the citizens and a safe working environment.

Sincerely,

The members and families of the Denver Police Protective Association