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Sheriff Scott Israel

February 24, 2018

Governor Rick Scott
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

Please accept this letter in response to an open letter issued to you today from Rep. Bill Hager, concerning the tragic Parkland school shooting. A quick response was important because Mr. Hager's reckless letter was riddled with factual errors, unsupported gossip, and falsehoods. Let me set the record straight on Mr. Hager's extensive errors:

- **HAGER'S FALSE STATEMENT:** *"The School Resource Officer and three Broward Sheriff Deputies were on campus at the time of the attack and chose to take cover themselves rather than stepping up to protect students."* – This statement is patently false. **Only one law enforcement officer was ever on the campus – at any time – during the attack:** Deputy Scot Peterson. Deputy Peterson immediately resigned Thursday after he was placed on unpaid suspension (pending likely termination) after our initial investigation showed he was present outside the 1200 Building but did not enter for at least four minutes of the attack. Coral Springs received the initial 911 call, and were dispatched to the scene knowing it was an active shooter incident, before the call was ever transferred to Regional Communications for dispatch for BSO (and it is believed Coral Springs Police Department officers arrived first at the school). CSPD officers made initial entry at the west doors of the 1200 Building, followed by more CSPD officers and BSO deputies. Unknown to the officers on the initial entry, video shows the killer had already fled the building over four minutes before they first entered the 1200 Building. Also note: BSO has a full active-shooter training program that all BSO deputies are required to attend (and with recurring refresher training). Deputy Peterson received the training, but clearly did not follow the protocols.
- **HAGER'S FALSE STATEMENT:** *"It has been reported that there were 23 calls to the Broward Sheriff's Office relating to Nikolas Cruz and his home, as well as 39 visits by Broward Sheriff Deputies."* – BSO had a total of 23 calls for service involving Nikolas Cruz or his family; and 18 of those involved Nikolas directly (the others involved his brother). Of the 18, nearly all but two involved routine calls from the mother relating to parenting issues (her sons were fighting; her son was banging pool equipment against the house; etc). BSO released the entire list of specifics of each call for service, and none were arrestable offences. Of the two encounters that remain under review, it is worth noting that in a subsequent incident at school, the BSO SRO subsequently referred Nikolas to DCF, and Nikolas received mental health counseling, DCF supervision, and medication

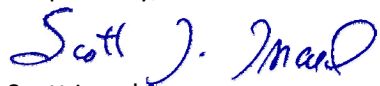
for 2.5 months before DCF closed the case. As to the final call which remains under BSO internal investigation: the BSO deputy who handled the call informed the reporting party (and noted in the CAD record) that Nikolas no longer resided in our jurisdiction, and advised the reporting party to contact law enforcement in his then-current county of residence (Palm Beach County). As BSO only had 23 calls for service (including the 18 involving the killer), Mr. Hager's claim of "39 visits by" BSO deputies is simply fiction.

- *HAGER'S FALSE CLAIMS: "This will not be the first time a review of the Broward Sheriff's Office will be done. After the mass shooting at the Fort Lauderdale Airport last years...."* – It is patently obvious that Mr. Hager has zero comprehension of law enforcement. After any major critical incident, all law enforcement agencies prepare self-assessments (often styled as After-Action Report, Lessons Learned Report, etc.). This is so an agency can learn from how the incident was handled and be even better the next time. These are routine in all agencies, including FHP, FDLE, and every Sheriff's office and police department in the state. The "problems" Rep. Hager referenced were the areas BSO itself identified in our own internal After-Action Report as needing improvement. And, in the interests of full public transparency, BSO widely shared copies of the report. As an aside, Mr. Hager also failed to note that BSO apprehended the killer in the FLL airport attack within 80 seconds of the first shot being fired.

I am very proud of the incredible work that so many from BSO and other agencies (including CSPD, FDLE, Sunrise, FBI, ATF and others) performed on February 14. And I am equally appalled that Rep. Hager felt a need to engage in disingenuous political grandstanding, perhaps in the hope he will garner some headlines, at the expense of the truth. I would urge Rep. Hager to publicly apologize for helping to spreading this false gossip and misinformation

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Scott Israel
Sheriff