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A Decorated Police Officer Should Not Be Charged For Protecting Our Community

VANCOUVER, WA: Officer Andrea Mendoza is a decorated member of the Vancouver Police Department and a veteran of our Armed Forces. She has spent years selflessly protecting our country and our city.

Officer Mendoza is also a mother of two young children and a member of our diverse Hispanic community. Her dedication to our city is overshadowed only by her love for her family and community.

On May 25, 2023, Officer Mendoza and her partner faced a dire situation. A noncompliant male suspect began fighting with her and her partner, as they attempted a variety of de-escalation and low-level force options to safely place the suspect in custody for Assault and Theft. Undeterred, the suspect repeatedly assaulted Officer Mendoza and her partner. Left with few reasonable options short of much higher levels of force, Officer Mendoza warned the suspect that he may be Tased in his groin. The suspect immediately complied and was taken into custody.

In response, the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney's Office has lost sight of its core obligation to hold criminals accountable. The Prosecuting Attorney's Office withdrew criminal charges against the combative suspect and has instead baselessly charged Officer Mendoza with misdemeanor assault. That shocks the conscience. Officer Mendoza did not commit a crime. She did her job. Even the suspect in this case did not consider himself a victim, nor did he want Officer Mendoza charged.

We ask much of our police officers. And our officers respond with utmost professionalism in often violent interactions with criminals. No officer should fear being charged with a crime for faithfully doing their job. Yet that is the new norm that the Prosecuting Attorney's Office has now announced with this tortured, baseless criminal charge against Officer Mendoza.

We are confident that after all the facts are presented to a jury, Officer Mendoza will be exonerated.

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The Vancouver Police Officers' Guild is labor organization representing commissioned Police Officers, Corporals, and Sergeants in the Vancouver, Washington Police Department.