

An official statement From Sheriff Howard regarding yesterday's rally.

From: Sheriff Timothy B. Howard

To: Members of the Media

Sheriff Howard.....

I agreed to speak at the Spirit of America rally to share my admiration and support for the United States Constitution and to raise the awareness of the broken immigration process that our leaders have failed to address over the past several years.

I understand that some members of the crowd at this public event displayed a confederate flag and I know that members of the Black Lives Matter organization were there as well. But how can I denounce any group's ability exercise their 1st Amendment right when I spoke at length about honoring our great society and our Constitution But I do not support any group that uses violent and discriminatory rhetoric, but how can I limit their god given rights to public assembly and free expression.

What is concerning to me is the democratic chairman, with his ultra-left views, is calling on me to pick and choose which group is protected by the first amendment and which one should be stripped of that right. I don't support a white supremacist's view of discrimination and bigotry as I don't support Black Lives Matter's hate and call for killing law enforcement personnel.

I stand by my speech which represents my love of the US constitution and calls for our immigration system to be fixed and nothing else.

Sheriff Timothy B. Howard's speech to Spirit of America Rally 2017

I am proud to be here today among fellow patriots – but must first recognize that the meaning of the word Patriot has been diluted by political rhetoric over the years.

Historically, American Patriots were the colonists who rebelled against British rule and ultimately gave birth to our nation. It began with a Declaration of Independence – and a statement of fundamental beliefs – if you reject these beliefs you are not a modern day patriot.

To be an American Patriot, you must accept that:

- All men are created equal,
- That we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights – including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
- That government is instituted to protect these rights, and
- That government powers come only from the consent of the Governed

That led to the Revolutionary War, followed by the Drafting of our Constitution –and various amendments thereafter.

To be a modern day patriot, you must both possess and display a strong passion and loyalty to the fundamental principles upon which our nation was formed, and to the constitution which establishes our form of government.

Many of you have heard me proclaim my support for the Second Amendments protection of our right to keep and bear arms. If you really listened you heard my support of our entire constitution including our choice of religion, freedom of speech, our right to peacefully assemble as we are doing here today. I also continue to support the freedom of the press, even when they are that is not equally supportive of me.

I have often quoted, or misquoted, the expression “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it. Last night I searched for the author – and learned that history had incorrectly attributed it to Voltaire when in fact it was written by a woman, Beatrice Evelyn Hall writing about Voltaire. The point I wish to make –is that we must respect the rights of others to express opinions contrary to our own.

I also want to encourage everyone to do their own thinking. Another great quote attributed to both Benjamin Franklin and Edgar Allan Poe, suggests that you should believe not of what you hear and only half of what you see.

Let me tell you some other things that I believe:

- I believe in the American people – regardless of where they came from

- I believe, as stated by Civil Rights Activist Malcolm X, that just being in America doesn't make you an American, nor does being born in America make you an American, just as sitting at a table does not make you a diner, you have to be eating from what's on your plate to be a diner.

Adding my own comment to this thought – to be an American you must embrace the principles of patriotism, those irrevocable principles cited in our Declaration of independence. I believe that we cannot reject the ideas of one president without rejecting those same ideas as once held by former presidents. By way of example – about 100 years ago President Theodore Roosevelt stated, “Every immigrant who comes here should be required within five years to learn English or leave the country.”

He also said, “In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin.”

But this is predicated upon the person's becoming in every facet an American and nothing but an American. President Roosevelt also denounced divided alliances and stated that one absolute way of bringing our nation to ruin is to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities.

President Ronald Reagan stated that “A nation that cannot control its borders is not a nation.”

I also believe, as stated by American Journalist Bill O'Reilly, "That the most powerful nation on earth should be able to pass a fair, effective immigration law that combines compassion with responsibility and does not injure hard working Americans who are taxed up to here.”

I believe that we may be a lifeboat for the world, but there is a limit to what any lifeboat can hold, and the responsibility to determine that ultimately rests with the captain, or in our case, the president.

Having spent most of my adult life in policing, I must spend a few minutes addressing the impact of the immigration and border debate upon police community relations. The police have a responsibility to assist all victims of crime.

About 12 years ago the Erie County Sheriff's Office partnered with Federal authorities on a human trafficking task force, one of the first in the nation. We know that residents of other countries are often lured by the American dream and place their trust in deceitful people – only to find themselves as modern day slaves. We still have an obligation to help them, and we know that the individuals who smuggle honorable, hardworking, but naïve people into this country – are just as willing to smuggle those who would do us harm. These smugglers are motivated by greed, and nothing else.

We also know that many of the illicit drugs killing our children are smuggled across our borders, like the heroin from Mexico and fentanyl from China that more than 100 Erie County residents already this year, including seven this week within a 24 hour period.

This week the International Association of Chiefs of Police, IACP released this statement on behalf of the majority of police agencies across our great nation; immigration enforcement is a complex and Challenging issue for communities and their law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. State and local agencies are steadfast in their commitment to removing from their community's dangerous criminals and others who pose a threat to public safety. Any suggestion to the contrary is simply inaccurate.

The IACP agrees that illegal immigration and border security issues directly impact the safety of communities and that effective action is needed to meet this challenge. At the same time, however, state and local law enforcement agencies depend on the cooperation of immigrants, legal or not, in solving a wide variety of crimes. Striking the proper balance between enforcement and cooperation requires the full participation of elected officials, community leaders, and their law enforcement agencies.

The IACP has and always will strongly oppose the use of sanctions to drive policy; this was true with prior administrations and remains true with the current administration. The funds provided through the Department of Justice support a wide variety of crime fighting, crime prevention, and public health initiatives. Penalizing communities by withholding assistance funding to law enforcement agencies and other critical programs is counter-productive to our shared mission of reducing violent crime and keeping our communities safe.

We stand ready to work with the administration to help identify thoughtful, effective solutions to this complex and challenging issue.

Let me end on a lighter note with a prayer, paraphrased from an Irish toast;

- God bless those who support our Constitution and defend our American way of life, and to those set on destroying our freedoms, may God turn their hearts, but if He cannot turn their hearts, may he at least turn their ankles so that we might know them by their limp.