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DISTRICT 27



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June 1, 2020

Col. Heston Silbert
Office of the Director
Arizona Department of Public Safety
2102 W. Encanto Blvd.
Phoenix, AZ 85009

Director Silbert,

I read with alarm media accounts of the officer-involved shooting that took the life of an unarmed African American man named Dion Johnson early last Monday morning on the Loop 101 freeway in North Phoenix.

These reports indicate only that there was "a struggle" that resulted in the trooper firing his gun at Mr. Johnson and killing him at some point after the trooper had found Mr. Johnson asleep in his car on the side of the freeway. The media reports also indicate that the DPS trooper had neither a functioning body camera or dash camera, or if he or she did they were not turned on.

I'm hoping you can explain to me why a trooper would be allowed to patrol a major freeway, on a busy Memorial Day holiday, without the protection of a body camera or dash camera. Also please outline any efforts to secure other video footage – from ADOT for example -- or witness statements to shed more light on how and why this alleged "struggle" occurred, and why it necessitated deadly force.

I am respectfully asking you for answers and for transparency. It seems clear that Mr. Johnson's past legal troubles have been provided or leaked to the media – whether relevant to this case or not. Why then does the public not yet know the name of the officer involved or his or her record with the Department?

As I'm sure you know, the distrust between communities of color and law enforcement agencies in Arizona has been widened and amplified not only by the alleged murder of George Floyd in Minnesota, but also by a number of recent officer-involved shootings and other incidents here at home. To passively dismiss this incident as "a struggle" when it took a man's life will not be acceptable to me, or the communities I represent.

Again, I am respectfully asking for your help and for basic transparency, as this investigation moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Reginald Bolding, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Reginald Bolding, Jr.
Arizona House of Representatives
Democratic Whip
Legislative District 27