

MESSAGE TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF INDY FOP FOLLOWING POSTING BY THE NFL

December 17, 2020

Greetings,

As many of you are aware, the National Football League (NFL) published a social media posting yesterday (12/16/2020) regarding a suspect who was found to have fired shots at an IMPD Officer earlier this year.

The post suggested the suspect was a victim of “systemic racism and police misconduct” as well as “a social justice hero” and that the suspect would be honored by the displaying of his name on the helmet of players this season.

Subsequently, several local media outlets published news articles on the NFL posting and included additional details related to a specific Colts player who was considering displaying the suspect’s name on his helmet.

After receiving inquiries from our membership and their families, we took steps on behalf of our 3,000 active and retired members to determine what the facts were related to the NFL position and that of the Indianapolis Colts.

Overnight and this morning, we were able to make contact with key leadership within the Colts organization. It was apparent the organization was not aware of the NFL posting. Through their review and our independent analysis, it appears many of the local media outlets simply reprinted previous articles they had published on the topic from August and September of this year. Incidentally, some of the outlets did not include the original publication dates yet included language that the specific player was contemplating wearing the name in “Week 1 or Week 2” of the season (back in August/September) which raised our concerns about the factual basis of these latest articles.

Through our review, we confirmed via the Colts organization they believe the latest news reports appear to be old news stories, the player neither displayed the name back then, nor has he since and no Colt is expected to do so this season.

We did confirm the NFL did make this post yesterday (12/16/2020) without the Colts’ knowledge or support.

Additionally, the Colts are now working diligently to determine if the NFL plans to remove the name/post. We remain in contact with the team and await any action if any from the League.

The Colts are also taking steps to contact local media outlets to make sure they are clear on these details and our membership will hopefully see some updates via the original stories.

Incidentally, the Colts do plan to honor a long-time employee of the organization who passed on from a battle with a long-term illness and all Colts players will display his name on their helmets this week.

Make no mistake, we will continue to monitor this matter and continue to examine any options available to our Lodge if we should need to follow up with the NFL.

Along those lines, today our local FOP briefed our State FOP President who represents 14,000 Indiana law enforcement officers. We also completed a briefing with our National FOP President who represents over 350,000 law enforcement officers from local, state and federal jurisdictions.

I want to thank the Colts organization for their responsiveness and timely actions related to this matter. While local communities across the country continue to grapple with difficult discussions regarding police and community relations (and we welcome those discussions) it is important to remember: The Community are the Police and the Police are the Community AND Facts Matter.

Therefore, we remain focused on solutions and continued dialogue. We again extend our invitation to the Indianapolis Colts to join us in our proactive efforts under our #ThinkBigger initiative which was launched three (3) years ago for these very purposes: to provide a platform to facilitate such discussions utilizing a model mutually focused on Education, Prevention, Intervention and Community Collaboration. We are confident when we Think Bigger about the challenges, we face...there is nothing we cannot accomplish TOGETHER.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any additional questions or concerns.

Fraternally,

Rick Snyder, President

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