



### **Blessed are the peacemakers**

Adversity. Our legal system in the United States is known as an adversarial system in which the parties to a case gather and present their evidence before an impartial person or group of people, who then render a finding based on the information provided. In our law enforcement world, adversity is commonplace. Historically, we find ourselves at odds with those who wish to violate the law and inflict harm on the members of our society who we are sworn to protect. It's a unique calling and one that only a select few can master.



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In recent years, that level of adversity has moved to much of mainstream America. We find ourselves wrongfully accused, threatened with civil or criminal sanctions, and physically

attacked more than ever before. How easy it would be to throw in the towel and let those who don't support us fend for themselves. But we are better than that and have proven this time and time again. When we hear the late-night talk show host making stupid jokes at our expense or the one-sided news reporting, there's not much we can do. Unfortunately, it has become fashionable to ridicule the concept of law and order, which is in direct conflict with the mandates we hold so dear.

These are difficult times in law enforcement, and it is up to us to decide how we will respond. A well-known author said, "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." Today, we are faced with very difficult circumstances and it is up to us as a collective voice to choose how we are going to respond.

The horrific tragedy in Las Vegas demonstrated how we respond to deadly situations. Many of you within our own membership were in attendance and immediately jumped in to assist. During these types of incidents, we are united in our effort to protect lives and stop the threat. Those outside our law enforcement community can express support and thanks, but only those who wear the badge can truly understand this level of commitment.

This is what has become so frustrating about the current state of affairs. When our own civic leaders (term used very loosely here) have failed us so miserably, we have two options: Give up, or fight to defend ourselves and those law-abiding citizens who rely on us to keep them safe. I choose the latter, as do the majority of our brothers and sisters in blue. This is what we do. We defend when under attack, and we seek out those who would cause harm.

These past years have been challenging. Politics have dictated our profession at the state and local levels. Propositions 47, 57 and AB 109 are all abject failures. Yet we will continue to work within the confines of these idiotic rules to the best of our ability. When local officials fail to support our efforts, we will hold them accountable and call them out to expose their shortsightedness and hypocrisy. We now have our former Attorney General and current Senator Kamala Harris advocating for revising the cash bail system so that defendants wouldn't have to pay any bail. The court would call or text the offender to remind them to appear at trial. Yeah, that sounds like a great idea. We have folks that don't appear when they *have* paid their bail. Someone better remind Kamala that we are a capitalist society, one of free market and free enterprise. And we do have systems in place to ensure there is sufficient probable cause to hold someone pending trial. Our own internal levels of review, in addition to the Probable Cause Determination process, is more than adequate to address the likelihood of a truly innocent person being unlawfully held.

But it's not all doom and gloom. Your League has made great strides in recent years and has regained its place as a force to be reckoned with. We have taken a hard look at many of the Department's practices and identified several shortcomings. We successfully addressed some of the deployment issues, the inherently flawed disciplinary system (in which our work is far from over), and the never-ending attacks on our benefits. Your League now provides recognition for officers who are worthy but were overlooked by the Department for one reason or another. My September 2017 *TBL* article spoke of the need for protection for our front desk personnel and the

obstacles we will need to overcome to ensure their safety. In addition, the symposiums sponsored by the League have been timely and well received, and the Smart Ride program filled a much-needed void.

We have our work cut out for us, but the one thing we have always been able to rely on is one another. Differences of opinion are healthy and stimulate meaningful, thoughtful exchanges. I find great satisfaction in championing our cause and advocating for those who have been wronged. But we must recognize that our collective effort is much more effective as we move toward realizing our goals. We face the challenge of a new contract in an openly hostile environment. The mistakes of the past will not be repeated, and we will propose an equitable contract that provides for all our membership.

Watch your back and be safe.

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