



PHOENIX LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

The Professional Association of Phoenix Police Officers Since 1975

July 12, 2016

Ms. Mi-Ai Parrish
President and Publisher
Republic Media
200 E. Van Buren
Phoenix, AZ 85004

RE: Steve Benson cartoon in July 9, 2016 edition of the Arizona Republic

Dear Ms. Parrish,

I am writing on behalf of the Phoenix Law Enforcement Association which is the representative organization that represents the interests of 2200 rank and file Phoenix Police Officers and detectives.

The cartoon penned by Steve Benson which was run in the July 9th edition of the Arizona Republic newspaper depicts a police traffic stop on an African American motorist with the caption "Making a traffic stop send me a body bag." The message you convey paints all police officers with a broad brush labeling them as racists and murderers.

Offensiveness of the cartoon itself aside, what is more disturbing is knowing that this cartoon had to be vetted and approved at numerous levels within your organization. The fact that several other news professionals saw nothing wrong with the message being conveyed shows the extreme callousness members of your organization have towards those who daily put their lives on the line to protect your constitutional rights.

What is also shocking and disappointing is knowing that Steve Benson himself has a law enforcement background. He previously served as a reserve officer with an east Valley police agency. This means he has had to undergo every bit of the training required by the State of Arizona under the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (AZPOST) to be certified to work the street. Mr. Benson above all others should have a clear understanding of what our men and women on the front lines in law enforcement go through to serve their communities and keep the peace. Knowing that Benson has a law enforcement background makes this particular cartoon even more abhorrent. Does the Arizona Republic believe the five police officers who were murdered in cold blood in Dallas were racists and murderers?

An Apology is owed to all men and women who work diligently to keep their communities safe. The Phoenix Law Enforcement Association will be immediately cancelling our subscription to the Arizona Republic and will be calling on others to do the same.

Sincerely,

Ken Crane
President
Phoenix Law Enforcement Association