

ACLU: School Celebration of Police, First Responders Sends 'Ominous, Frightening Message'

A patriotic, pre-game celebration honoring law enforcement and first responders at a high school football game has drawn the ire of the New Jersey chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

New Jersey's Middletown High School South saluted more than 100 police officers and military personnel on Oct. 21.

The celebration culminated with teenaged football players and police officers unfurling a massive American flag before singing the national anthem.

"A star-spangled celebration," is how the **Asbury Park Press** described the festivities.

But the ACLU of New Jersey exploded with fury—accusing organizers of sending an "ominous, frightening message."

In a letter to school leaders, the ACLU-NJ and the local chapter of the NAACP said the school was using the salute to "intimidate and ostracize people who express their views about systemic racism and social justice."

The controversy stems in part from some comments Middletown Police Deputy Chief Stephen Dollinger made to the Asbury Park Press.

He reportedly told the newspaper that the salute was prompted by the behavior of San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick.

"It's OK to stand up for social justice, inequality and reform," he told the newspaper in advance of the football game. "It's another thing to not stand up for the national anthem."

Dollinger later said his remarks had been "twisted" and the event had nothing to do with the disgraced NFL quarterback or Black Lives Matter.

"I said we respect the rights of everybody to stand up for social justice and equality and reform, but we also respect our country and want to celebrate the first responders, the national anthem," he told the newspaper.

Regardless, the idea of honoring those who protect and serve rankled the ACLU and their minions.

"The criticism the deputy police chief expressed for people who decline to stand for the national anthem in protest serves to erect walls between police and the communities they serve," said ACLU-NJ policy counsel Dianna Houenou.

"The people police are sworn to protect and serve should not have to fear that the value officers assign to them is determined by the beliefs they hold," she added.

Ms. Houenou fails to understand that police officers will come to the aid of any citizen—even those who spit on the badge and those who despise the flag.

Jasmine Crenshaw, another ACLU lackey, raged over the deputy chief's behavior.

"The statements made by the deputy police chief and the event's ostentatious show of power send an ominous, frightening message: that, as an official stance, law enforcement will not tolerate expressions acknowledging our nation's history of unequal treatment and systematic oppression," Crenshaw said.

“The magnitude of this event chills the belief that police should be held accountable when they abuse their power or discriminate against people of color, and pressures student athletes to act as props of the police,” she added.

Well, I want to salute the deputy police chief. He should be commended, not condemned for honoring first responders and our veterans.

I’m grown extremely tired of these anti-American agitators who have hijacked our sporting events and turned them into platforms to spew their hatred for the red, white and blue.

It’s a football game, folks—not a Million Man March.