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PRESS RELEASE

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Councilmembers Call for an Independent Investigation on Proud Boys Association

Fresno, CA – The revelation about one of our officers' involvement with the Proud Boys, a far- right, white nationalist organization that was involved in the insurrection at our nation's capital is beyond disturbing. It demands an independent investigation with its findings made public.

While we fully support Chief Balderrama's immediate action to initiate an internal department investigation. We recognize the Police Officers Bill of Rights and the City's Office of Independent Review policies would require such investigation findings be kept secret.

We have a responsibility to protect the trust that has been built between our police department and the communities it serves. The department's integrity and our public safety depends on this. The public deserves to know if this officer's association is an isolated incident or a broader department issue.

This is why we have requested that our City Attorney evaluate and advise the City Council on our options for an immediate independent investigation and a timely publication of the findings.

“At a time when our students, families and school leaders are debating the presence of police officers in our schools with our children, we have an obligation to ensure the officers we send them represent the best and most competent, not members of dangerous hate groups.” said Miguel Arias, Fresno City Council Member.

“Over the last 24 hours I have received concerns from members of our Black, Latino and LGBTQ communities and their increased fear of this type of hate existing within our police department. They need to be assured that our city has a department that will protect and respect them regardless of who they are. I applaud the Chief's swift action on such troubling claims, yet ask that for the sake of the community's trust we conduct an independent investigation that is transparent and makes our findings public.” said Esmeralda Soria, City Council Member

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