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*****MEDIA ALERT*****

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VANDERBURGH COUNTY PROSECUTOR EXPRESSES CONCERNS OVER VIGILANTE GROUPS

As the Vanderburgh County Prosecutor, I ask that all citizens reach out to law enforcement immediately if they suspect illegal activity.

The Vanderburgh County Prosecutor's Office is committed to collaboration with law enforcement to fight for victims, find and convict criminals, and bring cases to court which result in strong convictions and are upheld on appeal. Because of this goal, groups or individuals who take it upon themselves to undertake law enforcement functions in Vanderburgh County cannot be condoned by the Office of the Prosecutor for many legal and safety reasons.

First, actions by private, untrained—and sometimes armed—individuals who confront others pose a serious risk to the community, themselves, and can undermine legitimate investigations and cases which they are not privy to.

Secondly, the evidence untrained individuals think they are collecting can sometimes be legally problematic and inadmissible for use in bringing charges or taking a case to trial. This series of events is supremely frustrating for law enforcement and prosecution who spend years of certification and ongoing training on best practices to find and keep illegal activity out of our communities and to gain convictions which are upheld on appeal.

Law enforcement in Vanderburgh County collaborate with each other to fight crime. There are local, state, and federal investigations that the public is not privy to which can be thwarted by an unknowing civilian's involvement.

There are myriad of nuances to the law from investigation, arrest, and prosecution that involve years of technical, tactical, and legal training—which is ongoing throughout our careers. What the public sees on social media and television is dramatized, incomplete, over-simplified, and often inaccurate.

As a reminder, a person who chooses to pose as law enforcement, meddle in ongoing investigations, or is violent, may also be subject to criminal prosecution if a law is violated.

The citizens of Vanderburgh County can rest assured they have a fighter in their corner, and citizens can trust that I will work with law enforcement to respond with diligence and integrity to their concerns.

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