



JEAN PETERS BAKER
Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney

June 13, 2023

Honorable Michael L. Parson
Capitol Building, Room 216
P.O. Box 270
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Governor Parson:

Pardons are political actions by design, not devised for the innocent but for the guilty. I am writing because of numerous reports that suggest you are going to soon pardon former Kansas City Detective Eric DeValkenaere. I am writing to request that you do not pardon him.

DeValkenaere was fairly convicted and sentenced under Missouri law to Involuntary Manslaughter of Cameron Lamb and Armed Criminal Action. Your pardon now would preempt Attorney General Bailey's defense of this conviction and subvert the rule of law. The appellate process has not yet concluded. I am aware that you have been lobbied to pardon this officer, even before his trial. I imagine you might view a pardon as a way to support police. But I expect this extreme action for the only KCPD officer convicted of fatally shooting a black man will ignite distrust, protests, and public safety concerns for citizens and for police.

The most significant threat to public safety will not come from community protests. Perhaps the greater long-term harm will be an erosion of our public safety system as fair and just. A pardon of this convicted former police officer will accelerate that distrust that we already see in our system. Witnesses don't want to testify, and victims decline to prosecute their attackers, even after suffering great injury. This distrust will only grow when you, as overseer of KCPD, choose a political action over the legal process.

I would urge you to immediately speak with the victim's family. No one from your office or the Attorney General's Office has spoken with these victims and they deserve better. Secondly, I urge you to speak with this community. Convene a public meeting in Kansas City regarding your proposed actions. Kansas Citizens deserve to be heard.

As I am a public official, this letter is a public document and will be released. I ask again: please do not use a political action to subvert the rule of law.

Sincerely,

Jean Peters Baker

Jean Peters Baker
Prosecutor for Jackson County