



City of Omaha
Jean Stothert, Mayor

Letter not for public dissemination

June 9, 2025



Todd R. Schmaderer
Chief of Police

Sheriff Aaron Hanson
Douglas County Sheriff
3601 N. 156th St.
Omaha, NE 68116

Omaha Police Department
"To Serve and Protect"
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Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2769
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<https://police.cityofomaha.org/>

Dear Sheriff Hanson:

I am writing to you in order to address ongoing issues that have caused unnecessary community confusion and consternation. Myself, Mayor Stothert, Mayor-elect Ewing, as well as my entire Executive staff, are united in our desire to address these issues. To be clear, these comments in no way reflect on the men and women of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office (DCSO), but address the shift in priorities directed by DCSO leadership.

I realize the DCSO has jurisdiction in all of Douglas County, but make no mistake, the Omaha Police Department (OPD) is the primary law enforcement agency for the City of Omaha. The OPD has diligently and continuously worked with our community to establish strong community relations while policing in an effective manner. As a result, gun violence in the city has dropped in half, all index crimes are lower now than ten years ago (despite population increases), and the trend continues as homicides are lower now than last year's record low. The community has grown to respect and appreciate OPD's commitment to community relations and the resultant drop in crime.

Now, however, given the initial handling of the recent DCSO deputy-involved shooting, community relations are tense and have taken a negative turn. Right or wrong, causing further problems is the community has taken great issue with you personally, citing your track record and media (traditional and social) propensity as a reason for their mistrust. The reality is that damage is also being done to all law enforcement - community relations that will be irreparable unless meaningful action is taken. I cannot and will not let decades of work that we have built with the community be compromised. In the interest of assisting me with community relations I urge the following:

First, please inform OPD when your SOG Unit (Special Operations Group) is operating in Omaha. The community is very tense as it comes to the SOG Unit and there have been times since the deputy-involved shooting where the unit was active in Omaha and OPD was not aware. Members of the North Omaha community have demanded to understand why DCSO deputies were operating in North Omaha when this shooting occurred. OPD did not have knowledge of

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the DCSO surveillance operation. In addition, OPD is left to repair the damaged community relations in the wake.

In addition, your hiring of a recently terminated OPD officer has further inflamed the community, causing damage to law enforcement - community relations. It is perceived by many as a blatant disregard for the concerns of the citizens. While you are free to hire whomever you want, common sense and professional courtesy would lead one to ask for the Internal Affairs File, notify me as a heads-up, or simply wait until the arbitration process is complete. None of which you did.

Second, I strongly request you refrain from acting as a spokesperson on city matters. Since you have been in office, you have made numerous statements and commentary in traditional and/or social media concerning homeless encampments within the City, speed enforcement within the City, contracting to provide DCSO services within the City, and about crimes that have occurred in Omaha. While we appreciate a partnership, the media attention has been overkill, unproductive, and has led to confusion in the public as to who is responsible for these matters. This confusion and frustration have been bubbling up for a couple of years such that now it has reached a tipping point given the recent deputy-involved shooting.

In addition, there have been instances where you have publicly commented to the media about sensitive law enforcement operations affecting Omaha and provided information that should not have been discussed. The Omaha Police Department is, and should remain, the primary information source on policing within the City of Omaha. As Chief of Police, all communication regarding law-enforcement events and actions in the City of Omaha should come or be directed from me or the Mayor.

Third, OPD is the primary agency responsible for law-enforcement activities in the City of Omaha. The DCSO needs to return to the role of a partner that assists OPD rather than taking the lead when it is unbeknownst to us. Traditionally, the sheriff has confined the DCSO law enforcement actions to the parts of Douglas County outside of the city limits of Omaha, and for decades this partitioning of responsibilities has worked well. When the DCSO starts acting as a primary enforcement agency within the city it leads to an inconsistent message about who is responsible for policing in the city. Simply put, OPD can handle the policing needs of Omaha and will call upon other agencies to assist when needed.

Of course, we will continue to provide mutual aid, call on each other for assistance, and sit on joint task forces together as this level of cooperation has worked well between the two agencies. But it needs to be understood that the OPD will serve as the primary enforcement agency within the city.

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I am saddened to have to write this letter, but the circumstances you have put in motion have forced the city's hand. Again, no one is criticizing the deputies who work for DCSO, I am simply requesting you adhere to the points in question. Thank you, and I am available to discuss further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd R. Schmaderer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chief Todd R. Schmaderer
Omaha Police Department

- c. Douglas County Board of Commissioners
City Council President Festersen
Mayor Jean Stothert
Mayor-Elect John Ewing
Thomas Warren, Mayor's Office Chief of Staff
Matthew M. Kuhse, City Attorney