



City of Jeffersontown, KY

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JEFFERSONTOWN, KY – (JULY 25, 2019) – For decades, Jefferson County, and later Metro, have provided crossing guards throughout Jefferson County as a seamless means to protect our children. Crossing guards are specifically trained, motivated and experienced members of our community who serve an important, but limited, public safety function. They are not, of course, police officers, who play a very different role in protecting our communities.

Yesterday, through a press release, we were notified that children attending school in Jeffersontown would no longer be protected by Metro Louisville's crossing guard. In a nonsensical fashion, the blame was placed on budget cuts, yet the guards are not being laid off, but reassigned to other areas in Metro. Thus, there cannot be a cost savings.

So the truth lies elsewhere. Since June, the Metro community has been subjected to surprise announcements of tripling taxes, threats of massive cuts in public safety, withdrawal of school resource officers, library closings, pool closings, and now crossing guards. Remarkably, libraries, SROs, pools and school crosswalks are most oriented toward children, and they are some of the first residents Metro seems to be leaving behind. It is very disheartening that Metro does not consider the safety and well-being of children as its highest priority, but seemingly as its lowest.

Budgeting is not a retaliatory sport whereby you put children in harm's way because you didn't get the tax increase you wanted. Incredibly, the suburban cities played no role in that decision, and yet they are the areas being withheld services. Jeffersontown residents pay exactly the same county taxes as every other county resident pays. Now, Metro has decided that it will selectively withdraw services from certain of its citizens. Astoundingly, the services it has chosen to withdraw are those specifically directed to the safety of children— many children who attend school in Jeffersontown but live elsewhere in the county.

The relocation of crossing guards is a disturbing sign of a vacuum of leadership. LMPD, which has jurisdiction in every square inch of Jefferson County, has now been directed to selectively withdraw protection of children in certain areas of the county. That is a horribly dangerous and irresponsible precedent to set. To cloak it under the ruse of budget cuts—when it is merely a reassignment of crossing guards who will remain on the payroll—only can lead to further mistrust. And mistrust is about the last thing our community needs more of than it already has.

When a community seeks to control expenses by withdrawing services specifically intended to protect children, it is clear that community needs to go in a different direction.

WHO: Jeffersontown Mayor Bill Dieruf