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CONTACT: **Robert Ferraro**  
**602.492.8621**  
**[president@aztoa.org](mailto:president@aztoa.org)**

**TEMPE OFFICER ASSOCIATION RESPONSE TO BENSON'S VIEW CARTOON PUBLISHED ON JULY 8 2016  
IN AZ REPUBLIC  
(Tempe – July 11, 2016)**

Our Officers and Sergeants who work tirelessly in the City of Tempe in service to their citizens, found the recent "Benson's View" cartoon published on July 8, 2016 in the Arizona Republic, divisive and distasteful. The cartoon, printed the day after five Dallas police officers were murdered protecting protestors exercising their free speech, depicted an African American male seated in his vehicle in what appears to be a vehicle stop by a white police officer with the words, "Making a traffic stop, send me a body bag". The intent is clear to the men and women who not only wear the badge every day and night but who steward the service-guardian philosophy, that we are all blood thirsty murderers. The fallout from this current social media climate and "war on cops" will be devastating. When good men and women become reluctant to stand up and serve their community to protect us from the evil in the world we will have lost our freedoms forever.

The vitriol of this cartoon does nothing to stir political debate or suggest a much needed conversation amongst all stakeholders in communities; it only further divides us. It adds to the hate that already exists and plays to the lowest common denominator.

Our men and women in law enforcement come from all backgrounds. They swore to defend and protect the constitution of the United States. The 1<sup>st</sup> amendment is the greatest freedom we have as a nation and it should never be infringed upon. We are proud to live in a country where Mr. Benson has the right to illustrate his thoughts or beliefs; just as we have the right to publish a response.

We look to our elected officials, our community leaders and even responsible satirist's to lead us through these difficult times as a nation but it has become quite clear that several have fallen victim to the current narrative and continue to inflame and divide. Instead it will be the police who will lead their community through the smoke and the hate holding the moral high ground and treating all with dignity and respect.



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**ABOUT TEMPE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**

*The Tempe Officers Association is an integral part of the City of Tempe and was formed by the state certified sworn Officers and Sergeants of the Tempe Police Department who are dedicated to improving the working conditions of its members as well as actively involving themselves in the community. Our association, which encompasses nearly 350 sworn officers and sergeants, is committed to looking for ways to improve the City of Tempe and provide for the safety and welfare of those we serve.*