



Missoula Police Department

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Press Statement on DOJ Findings Release

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Good Morning.

A year ago as I stood with officials announcing this investigation into the Missoula Police Department, the University of Montana and its Office of Public Safety, I told those gathered that MPD had months earlier begun an examination of our work around violence against women and assured our community that I was confident this investigation would not reveal any shocking evidence of intentional discrimination. And while nothing about the investigation has proven otherwise to me, we continue to recognize our opportunity to improve and are committed to doing so.

In fact, when I addressed the community and Missoula City Council on January 25th, 2012, I told those in attendance that Missoula police officers, including myself, are not perfect; that we can do better and that so far in our review it seemed communication with victims of sexual violence was a weak point for us. I pledged to “find ways to challenge our officers to become better communicators and learn to be more accomplished at responding to victims of sexual violence.” We are doing that and will continue to moving forward.

We saw an opportunity to improve and had already begun to coordinate those efforts when this investigation began. We put in place new policies, conducted more training, and reviewed our work on previous cases. We engaged our victim-service partners, collaborating to improve access to and familiarity with the array of assistance Missoula offers victims of sexual crimes.

Through a long, cooperative process with the U.S. Department of Justice, its investigators identified the same investigative weaknesses we did among an otherwise exceptional group of professional men and women. Our officers want to be the best and today’s agreement only affirms their conviction and duty to do so.

When our citizens hear promises from us, they deserve to see those promises fulfilled. This agreement represents a promise to make our police force, which is dedicated to high standards of service and ethics, become even better servants to the public we are sworn to protect. If we’ve lost any trust in our community, we will rebuild it. Thank you.

Mark Muir