



Pueblo County Sheriff's Office

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News Release

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Sheriff Lucero Addresses Labor Union Concerns

Pueblo, CO: Pueblo County Sheriff David J. Lucero reiterated Wednesday that he will continue to wait for legal guidance before he enters negotiations with the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, the recently certified union sheriff's employees voted to represent them.

"When that legal guidance is provided, I'd be happy to bargain if that's what the law says," Sheriff Lucero said. "If it doesn't, then I will continue to do what I have been doing all along and that's to continue to advocate for my people."

Employees of the Sheriff's Office voted on December 14, 2023, to certify the International Brotherhood of Police Officers to represent the bargaining unit. The decision to unionize comes because of a law that went into effect in July 2023 that gives county employees the right to unionize and bargain collectively.

However, the office of the sheriff is different from other county offices as there are responsibilities and authority granted to elected sheriffs by the state constitution and state statutes. Lucero, as well as other sheriffs in the state, have said they want clarification on how those laws and statutes may interfere with some negotiation topics.

Lucero said that there are times when legislation gets "rushed through" without realizing all the potential loopholes and ramifications, and this is one of those times.

"The bill is clear when it comes to all other county offices but there are laws on the books that specifically govern the sheriff, which I believe is done for public safety," he said. "We can't afford to have inefficiencies with staffing and the mission the sheriff's office when we are dealing with life and death situations."

The recent consternation with the union is acting before there is clarification under the law, Lucero said. "Of course, I am going to follow the law and enforce the laws, that's what I was elected to do."



Lucero added it would be disingenuous to begin negotiating without a clear legal decision on what can and cannot be brought to the bargaining table.

“Imagine if we started bargaining on unclear grounds and then I get guidance there are issues,” he said. “What a waste of time, energy and resources not to mention the distrust and trouble that would be created in trying to undo those concessions.”

In the meantime, Lucero said he will continue to advocate for his employees as he has done since he was appointed sheriff in October 2022.

“This office relies on people, and I will continue to support them regardless. I bargain for them every day, doing what I can to get them resources,” he said. “I look for new technologies to improve their response and safety and seek grants for everything from those technologies to vehicles. I continually advocate for my employees with the Board of County Commissioners.”

Lucero said he is not anti-labor union and recognizes that Pueblo has historically been a strong union town. “I strongly believe that at this time, entering into negotiations in areas that may interfere with my statutory duties and responsibilities would be an action that is contrary to my obligation under the law,” he said. “Laws are on the books for a reason - to protect the public. I was elected to uphold and enforce the laws and I am going to continue to do so.”

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