



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Statement from the Mayor of Santa Clara, Lisa M. Gillmor
regarding Safety at Levi's® Stadium***

Santa Clara, California – September 7, 2016

Sometimes when complex issues become simplified by symbolic gestures and words, true meaning and true purpose can be lost in translation. That happened when Colin Kaepernick decided to sit down for the National Anthem during an NFL preseason game.

In our free society, he has the right to express his view. But because it was an act without explanation, it has become controversial and, by Mr. Kaepernick's own admission, misinterpreted. So too, I believe, was his choice to wear socks that thoughtlessly demeaned all police officers and his post-game statements about murder and racism that were considered disparaging to many good police officers.

When Santa Clara police officers responded by suggesting that they may not work at 49er games, this too was misinterpreted. Our officers work voluntarily at these games to protect the fans and the players. They are not required to do so, despite what the police chief has publicly implied. 49er games and other stadium activities are private events that combine private security with off-duty police officers. Just as Mr. Kaepernick has the right to sit down for the National Anthem, off-duty police officers have the right to sit out football games.

However, I wish they would not, even though their participation is voluntary. I believe this act would be misinterpreted by the public, as our excellent police officers would be viewed as taking sides in a debate that is more complex and important than a football game or what they may choose to do with their off-duty time.

The public should know what we in Santa Clara know: we have outstanding officers who for decades have been considered some of the best in our state and nation. We are proud of them and appreciate their service to our city. In addition, they are integral to the success of our stadium. Without their voluntary service which frequently requires them to sacrifice time with their families to work longer days and overtime, the public would feel less safe during games and major events. As Santa Clara's mayor, I ask the good men and women of our police department to continue their great service to our community by continuing to work at 49ers games and other major events.

Together, we can demonstrate that freedom of speech and public safety are both important and can coexist in our community.

Thank you.

Lisa M. Gillmor
Mayor, Santa Clara

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