Dear Livingston County Residents:

Generally, I refrain from comments or engaging with folks on social media. I have made it very clear throughout the years, that I use social media as a vehicle to share information. As a rule, I do not comment on open investigations either, as both can be rabbit holes. I prefer to lean on advice from a friend that says, “Don’t make a one-day story a two-day story”. However, sometimes I simply cannot ignore a situation, particularly when the entire truth should be available. I would like to take a couple minutes to address the Kasey Helton complaint, as well as the editorial written by Judy Daubenmier.

However, before I do, I recall a saying that is so true in the Public Safety arena, and that is “the truth is stranger than fiction.” That said, sometimes the truth can be boring and does not make for a good story which is the case here. In an effort not to author War and Peace, I will touch on the highlights:

**TRUTH**: Even when people encounter the truth, they still do not believe it, because more times than not perception is reality, and assumptions and fiction are a lot more fun.

**TRUTH**: Law Enforcement has discretion in the laws it chooses to enforce and investigate, with the primary drivers being community expectations and resources.

**TRUTH**: The Prosecutor’s Office operates much the same way. You just need to look at our surrounding counties to see the contrast.

**TRUTH**: A Law Enforcement agency cannot **file** charges. It is the job of the Prosecutor’s Office to **file** charges.

**TRUTH**: Laws change and community expectations change, therefore law enforcement is constantly learning what laws to investigate and enforce. It does no good to expend resources if we know that charges will not be forthcoming. Therefore, we are always looking to see where that line is.

**TRUTH**: My office has refused to investigate numerous complaints based on free speech. For those individuals who believe they have absolute free speech, it would not work out well for you if you yelled FIRE in a theater or BOMB in an airport.

**TRUTH**: Mrs. Daubenmier, says in her editorial that I hung my hat on free speech when the President was in town and things got a little boisterous.

**TRUTH**: Mrs. Daubenmier is correct. We had just been through a year of protests after the killing of George Floyd. We had numerous rallies and protests in the county, and as such, we knew exactly where the lines were and what we were going to enforce.

**TRUTH**: Not taking any action when the President was in town had nothing to do with politics. I acknowledge we could have done some things better and we learned some important lessons. Moving forward, we will draw on those lessons learned.

**TRUTH**: This was not a political stunt because I aspire to a higher office. I have the best job in the world; I have the best staff in the world. This is the best county in the world. Rest assured I plan to be here for a long time

**TRUTH**: The Sheriffs’ Office does not determine investigation based on political affiliation, race, gender, age, religion etc. We determine investigation based on expectations within the community, the resources available, and what the Prosecutor’s Office is willing to charge.

**TRUTH**: A woman came into the lobby of the Sheriff’s Office wishing to file a complaint. Normally the Deputy would have said no. However, the Deputy felt this particular set of circumstances crossed the line. He based this on the fact the “suspect” in this case was going after the complainant’s employer.

**TRUTH**: Knowing that this has been an ever-evolving issue, the Deputy asked my thoughts. I agreed and felt that when you start going after someone’s livelihood, that is crossing the line.

**TRUTH**: I directed the Deputy to do a report and forward it to the Prosecutor’s Office so we would be able to get a clearer picture of where the line is on filing charges.

**TRUTH**: Kasey Helton turned to social media after the Deputy contacted her.

**TRUTH**: This is the best part; I had no idea who the focus of this investigation was until Kasey Helton turned to social media, so to say this is politically motivated could not be further from the truth. As stated previously, generally the truth does not make as good a story.

**TRUTH**: Had I known Mrs. Helton was the focus, I would have asked the Michigan State Police to investigate.

**TRUTH**: I pray you all had a great Christmas, and I wish nothing but the best for you and your families in 2022.