ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 11

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman PARKER SPACE
District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)
Assemblyman HAROLD "HAL" J. WIRTHS
District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)

SYNOPSIS

Condemns publication and distribution of images inciting, glorifying, or justifying violence against law enforcement officers.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION strongly condemning the publication and distribution of all images that incite, glorify, or justify violence targeting law enforcement officers.

WHEREAS, Law enforcement officers are essential to the safety and well-being of this nation and all United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, Recently, disturbing images have been circulated illustrating the beheading of American law enforcement officers; and

WHEREAS, The radical Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and its ideology of terror, represents an existential threat to democracy worldwide and uses beheadings in the furtherance of its global ambitions, which is a form of cruel and unusual punishment as well as a crime against humanity; and

WHEREAS, The terrorist group ISIS has declared that a state of war exists between it and the United States of America, its allies, the military organizations of this country and its allies, and American citizens and those of our allies worldwide; and

WHEREAS, In July 2016, a National Football League (NFL) player used social media to publish and circulate a graphic image, similar to the horrific images released by ISIS, of a masked person slitting the throat of a police officer; and

WHEREAS, While the NFL player removed this image shortly thereafter and issued an apology, the initial post served to perpetuate the targeting of law enforcement officers, and an apology does not safeguard those officers who serve and protect the public; and

WHEREAS, While the First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects offensive images and commentary, these images are intolerable and there is no justification for targeting or assassinating law enforcement officers who selflessly serve and protect all people and deserve the same freedoms and protections to live their lives as any other citizen of New Jersey and this nation; and

WHEREAS, Under the Constitution of the United States of America, speech is protected; however, it is incumbent upon citizens to combat disturbing and offensive speech with more speech to counter it; and

WHEREAS, It is in the public interest of the citizens of the State of New Jersey and this great nation to condemn, in the strongest terms, any hate speech and the publication or distribution of images inciting, glorifying, or justifying violence against law enforcement officers and inciting violence against them; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. This House strongly condemns the publication and distribution of all images that incite, glorify, or justify ISIS-style violence targeting law enforcement officers.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the President and Vice President of the United States of America, the presiding officers of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives, each member of Congress elected from the State of New Jersey, the Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police, the President and Executive Director of the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, and the President of the New Jersey State Policemen's Benevolent Association.

STATEMENT

This resolution strongly condemns the publication and distribution of images inciting, glorifying, or justifying violence against law enforcement officers.

Law enforcement officers are essential to the safety and well-being of this nation and all United States citizens. Recently, disturbing images have been circulated illustrating the beheading of American law enforcement officers, including one of a graphic image of a masked person slitting the throat of a police officer, published on social media by a National Football League player. While the player removed this image shortly thereafter and posted an apology, the initial post served to perpetuate recent violence against law enforcement officers and an apology does not protect the officers who are targeted. This image portrayed the graphic nature of beheadings used by the radical Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which is a form of cruel and unusual punishment as well as a crime against humanity.

While the First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects offensive images and commentary, these images are intolerable and there is no justification for targeting or assassinating law enforcement officers, who selflessly serve and protect all people. All law enforcement officers deserve the same freedoms and protections to live their lives as any other citizen of New Jersey and this nation. Under the Constitution of the United States of America, speech is protected; however, it is incumbent upon citizens to combat disturbing and offensive speech with more speech to counter it.