

Saint Louis Police Officers Association
Attn: Edward Clark
3710 Hampton Ave
Saint Louis, MO 63109

CC: Mayor Lyda Krewson

Mr. Clark,

We write today in response to Jeff Roorda's recent threat that Circuit Attorney, Kim Gardner, will be removed from her office "by force or by choice." By allowing him to remain your business manager, you are complicit in this attack.

We ask that you send a clear message that this type of conduct—by Roorda or anyone in the police union—will not be tolerated and fire Roorda immediately.

Roorda's statement includes language that incites violence and is dangerous to our communities. It goes without saying that the St. Louis Police Officers Association, including Roorda, should be supporting and joining Gardner in her commitment to public safety. By engaging in bullying and threatening behavior towards Gardner, Roorda is making St. Louis less safe.

This most recent statement by Roorda is just one example amid a history of unacceptable and unwarranted provocations by Roorda towards Gardner and other city officials. In 2015, at a meeting to discuss a civilian review board following the shooting death of Michael Brown, Roorda physically went after an alderman, pushing an African-American woman in the process. In 2017, as you well know, Roorda called mayoral candidate Tishaura Jones "lazy" and a "race-baiter." Last holiday season, Roorda turned Gardner into a photoshopped Grinch and placed it in a holiday-themed column in your newsletter. After each of these incidents, you failed to take action against Roorda. And Roorda, emboldened by your silence, has continued his attacks.

Roorda's provocations towards Circuit Attorney Gardner impede her ability to effectively prosecute serious cases as well as undermine public safety. Gardner is committed to directing her office's valuable resources and time to reducing violence and solving homicides, including the tragic unsolved child murders in our city. As Mayor Krewson has stated, we are all at risk until these murders are solved. And Gardner agrees that this is where law enforcement should be focused. Your union should be supporting public safety, not intentionally hindering it by attacking our Circuit Attorney. Your union should be joining Gardner in addressing violence, not inciting it. Roorda's recent threat to remove Gardner by force is, at best, counterproductive to public safety and, at worst, criminal.

The signatories to this letter are public interest organizations with a history of advocacy to protect integrity in the rule of law, the rights of communities of color, and basic civility in our public discourse. Over many years we have been appalled at the behavior of Roorda, who has acted as a spokesperson for the St. Louis Police Officers Association. His most recent actions lead us to write this letter calling upon the Association to fire Roorda.

Integrity among our police officers and your union is central to public safety, and is essential to establishing trust between the police and communities they serve. It is critical that your union members understand that they cannot incite violence without being held accountable.

Mayor Krewson has recognized how damaging Roorda is to our community. At the time of her campaign, she asked you to fire him calling him “despicable” and “abusive”. Since that time, his behavior has become more dangerous. Now that she has been elected Mayor, we expect that Krewson will, again, unequivocally and publicly denounce his behavior. But you have the power to stop it. We urge you to join Gardner in protecting St. Louis, hold Roorda accountable for his actions, and fire Roorda now.

Sincerely,

Adolphus Pruitt | President, St. Louis NAACP

Nimrod Chapel | President, Missouri NAACP

Zaki Baruti | President/General, United African People's Organisation

Faizan Syed | Executive Director, CAIR-Missouri

Kayla Reed | Director and Co-Founder, Action St. Louis

Reverend Cassandra Gould | Executive Director, Missouri Faith Voices

Amy Breihan | Director, MacArthur Justice Center St. Louis, Missouri

Reverend David Gerth | Executive Director, Metropolitan Congregations United

Jamala Rogers | Executive Director, Organization for Black Struggle

