

SPPD Removes References to Blue Lives Matter Movement

By **Mitch Lehman** - July 24, 2020

The South Pasadena Police Department has removed any mention of the Blue Lives Matter or Blue Line Matters movements after complaints were received by Chief Joe Ortiz as well as members of the City Council.

Ortiz told The Review that an SPPD motorcycle officer had placed a Blue Lives Matter sticker on the back of his helmet and that Ortiz asked the officer to remove the decal.

"Employees are not allowed to use public property to share their personal beliefs," Ortiz said. Ortiz later received an anonymous email from a source who said the department's Facebook page included references to and hashtags for Blue Lives Matter and Blue Line Matters that he also had removed from the social media platform.

The Blue Lives Matter movement began in December 2014 and proposes that the killing of law enforcement officers be considered a hate crime. "Blue line" refers to the continuum of police officers and refers to the color of the uniforms of most police departments.

"I am understanding of the current climate and the sensitivity of peoples' feelings," said Ortiz. "I provided direction that we would no longer be posting anything referencing any of these organizations."

Ortiz mentioned that he is aware of similar instances in which references to Blue Lives Matter, Blue Line Matters or the Thin Blue Line have been removed by other police departments.

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With over 22 years in publishing and a long time local, Mitch Lehman is a frequent contributor to the South Pasadena Review and Quarterly magazine. He has received two independent Pulitzer Prize nominations and in 2016, Mitch won 5 awards in the California Newspaper Publishers Association's Better Newspapers Contest.