

## **Garden State COPS – A New Jersey Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors**

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**For immediate release:**

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Garden State COPS would like to extend our condolences to the family of Jacqueline and Christina Becker. Having tragically and suddenly lost a family member as well, we understand their family's grief.

It is with great sadness that we rally to support Trooper Higbee. Sadness because his indictment should never have taken place. Trooper Higbee's actions were tragic, but not criminal. It is the hardest thing in the world to face the fact that something such as this event was "an accident", but that is what it was. I personally understand this. My husband, Essex County Police Officer Keith Neumann was shot and killed during a drug raid ACCIDENTALLY by another officer. I was angry, and I felt that the word "accident" was too small for my husband's death. But that is what it was. It was a hard thing for me to accept, and I knew it was even harder for the officer who killed him. I knew too that Keith was the first thing that officer thought of in the morning and the last thing he thought of in the evening. I felt that this burden was punishment enough. I am sure Trooper Higbee carries the same burden.

We are not talking about someone who knowingly went out with the intent of injuring another human being. We are talking about a man who has dedicated his life to helping and protecting the public. What kind of message is being sent out to our law enforcement community? Do your job, but don't engage in anything because it could lead to charges against you. What happens when our officers refuse to pursue criminals or issue summonses because they are afraid of being charged with a crime to satisfy the whim of a politician or placate an uninformed and biased media? Will the pendulum swing the other way and officers will be charged for crimes that took place because they did NOT act fast enough?

Nothing in this world can bring back Jacqueline and Christina Becker or take away the pain and suffering her family and friends feel right now. Charging an innocent man with their death will not make the situation better. Instead of being allowed to heal, all families involved are now subjected to having their grief remain an open wound for years to come.

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