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TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC" INTERACTING WITH POLICE: JUST TRYING TO AVOID SOME BROKEN BONES!



By Stephen L. Bakke  June 9, 2016

Here's what provoked me:

A Minnesota State Representative suggested a set of very pointed "rules of conduct" to follow when confronted by police. His purpose was for readers to consider one more way to avoid police violence. It had suggestions I certainly would pay attention to. As expected it drew many! many! follow-up letters that were published, including mine presented below. It amazes me how political correctness has our society in a stranglehold. So much so that when someone like Representative Cornish makes a few good points, however indelicate, they are deplored and shouted down by too many pundits. Political correctness has started to wipe out even civil debate. This is intolerance taken to a whole new level. Has it even had the effect of expanding our standards of acceptable behavior? Has this caused many to somehow rationalize and condone what was once unacceptable behavior? Stay tuned!

Here's my response:

Interacting with Police: Just Trying to Avoid Some Broken Bones!

Republican Rep. Cornish gave some pointed advice in his June 8 letter advising how to "reduce the use of force by police." As I would expect, he was attacked by numerous letters on June 9. Cornish is criticized for missing the real point – the real problem is racist structures, not citizen behavior. He's criticized for not discussing the element of "race and privilege." He's reminded of his omission of the historical element of slavery. Another letter found his letter to be "horrifyingly offensive" but didn't say why. Finally, a June 9 report by Ricardo Lopez references the reaction of the president of the Minneapolis NAACP – i.e. Cornish's use of the word "thug" was a coded reference to black men and therefore racially charged.

Participants in this editorial debate between one man and a few opponents can't even decide what they are arguing about. That's our polarized system. There's certainly ample room for a logical discussion about practical approaches to behavior when dealing with a stressed element of our system – our constantly maligned police officers. I also acknowledge that the problem is bigger than just having "behavior rules" for confrontations with police. Cornish does a good job dealing with one "corner" of the solution. I strongly object to the fact that "political correctness" won't even permit someone like Cornish to define even part of the problem or the solution.

All Cornish wanted to do was reduce the number of broken bones.