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STATEMENT FROM MICHAEL HELLE, PRESIDENT OF SAPOA

SAN ANTONIO, TX—The San Antonio Police Officers Association (SAPOA) respects Mayor Taylor and her call for a “holiday truce” in the ongoing public media outreach regarding police and fire contract negotiations. The intent of our media outreach is to educate and inform the general public regarding key negotiating facts. Additionally, we wanted to directly address inconsistencies and misinformation in City talking points and public messaging.

SAPOA agrees with and applauds the Mayor’s call for a third party, independent actuary and will work together with City leadership to choose the right person or team for the job. SAPOA believes both sides of this negotiation are best served by starting from a core set of financial figures that removes personal or organizational bias and focuses on facts.

Michael Helle, President of SAPOA, had the following comment:

*“SAPOA wants to extend our gratitude to Mayor Taylor for her recommendation to engage a third party actuary to verify financial figures. It’s a positive step in the right direction. We are also respectful of her request for a “truce” in media outreach. Unfortunately, all police officers and firefighters are faced with a personal attack in the form of a lawsuit filed by the City to strip first responders of their hard-earned collective bargaining rights. Any truce should have included withdrawing the lawsuit and returning to the bargaining table as partners in the City’s future. As Mayor Taylor stated, “This is not about us vs. them—**there is only us.**” The lawsuit **divides us** instead of bringing people together. SAPOA reserves the right to engage the community in a professional and fact-based manner going forward.”*

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