

Letter to the Editor: Bob Harvey, State's Attorney for Calvert County

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As State's Attorney for Calvert County, I have taken an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States and to enforce the laws of the State of Maryland without partiality or prejudice. Given the unrest that has followed the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, it is important for the citizens of Calvert County to know what this oath means.

The right of the people to assemble peacefully and air their grievances is a fundamental right enshrined in the First Amendment. I embrace this right. It is the foundation of our democracy. Three of the most significant individuals who have inhabited this planet, Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., used the power of peaceful, non-violent protest to bring about lasting, meaningful change. History has rewarded them accordingly.

Of course, the operative words are "peaceful" and "non-violent." The Supreme Court has made it clear that the First Amendment does not protect someone who would endanger others by shouting "fire" in a crowded theater. Maryland law specifically prohibits rioting, disturbance of the public peace, and malicious destruction of property, among other things.

As your State's Attorney, I promise to respect the rights of all citizens to assemble peacefully and make their voices heard. Likewise, as your State's Attorney, I promise to prosecute those individuals who choose to violate the law, to destroy the peace and property of others, or who threaten or attempt to bring violence to our neighborhoods.

In this manner, I will treat all people equally and fairly, regardless of race, color, creed, or point-of-view. This is what is meant by enforcing the laws without partiality or prejudice. This is what is meant by equal justice under the law. This is what I intend to do.

Bob Harvey,
State's Attorney

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