



JOSHUA A. GARCIA  
Mayor

**Holyoke Police Department**  
**138 Appleton Street**  
**Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040-5706**



DAVID PRATT  
Chief of Police

September 6, 2022

Council President Todd McGee  
Holyoke City Hall  
536 Dwight St, Room 10  
Holyoke, MA 01040

CF 0153-22

Dear Council President McGee,

I am very disturbed by the remarks made by Councilor Jose Maldonado Velez at the City Council meeting on September 1, 2022. Councilor Maldonado Velez's assertion that the Holyoke Police Department is literally "a gang...that comes out with force" is not only offensive to every member of the Holyoke Police Department it is extremely naïve to what services the Holyoke Police do provide to the citizens of Holyoke on a daily basis.

Equally disturbing to me was watching Councilor Maldonado Velez attempt to minimize his comment by stating that a gang was "just a group of people." However, when I googled the term *gang* the definition provided was *an organized group of criminals*. Checking further, the definition in Webster's Dictionary is also troubling; it states a *gang* is *a group of persons working to unlawful or antisocial ends*.

President McGee, I find it shocking that a sitting City Councilor would view his local police department under either of these definitions. The hard-working men and women of the Holyoke Police Department deserve better from their elected officials who are supposed to work in conjunction with the police department and support us so that we can in turn provide the citizens of Holyoke with the best possible police services.

I have spoken with both presidents of the police unions. We are in agreement that we would like to see one of the following remedies to these unfortunate comments:

1. A full retraction of the comment and a public apology to the men and women of the Holyoke Police Department
- OR
2. We would ask that Councilor Maldonado Velez recuse himself from ALL votes pertaining to the Police Department as he has clearly shown a very public bias toward the Holyoke Police Department.

I look forward to hearing from you about any decisions made regarding this unfortunate situation. Thank you in advance for the attention I know you will give this matter.

Sincerely,

David R. Pratt  
Chief of Police

*Birthplace of Volleyball 1895*

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