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WPPA STATEMENT ON DANE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S DECISION IN COREY RUIZ SHOOTING

(MADISON, Wis.) – Following Dane County District Attorney Ismael Ozanne's announcement that Madison Police Officer Kiel Baitinger-Peterson was legally justified in his use of deadly force during the July 22, 2026, officer-involved shooting of Corey Ruiz, Wisconsin Professional Police Association (WPPA) Executive Director Jim Palmer issued the following statement:

"We believe the district attorney's determination that Officer Baitinger-Peterson's use of deadly force was legally justified is supported by the evidence and consistent with the legal standards governing the use of force by law enforcement officers.

"As the independent investigation has established, officers were responding to multiple reports of criminal activity when they encountered Mr. Ruiz. As an officer attempted to detain him, Mr. Ruiz produced a large, kitchen-style knife from his clothing. Despite the efforts of additional officers to gain control of the situation, including the use of less-lethal measures, Mr. Ruiz continued to resist while armed with the knife. These circumstances are central to understanding the immediate danger confronting the officers and the rapidly evolving decisions they were required to make.

"Today's announcement also underscores the importance of allowing independent investigations to proceed without prejudging their conclusions. Wisconsin has long recognized that incidents involving the use of deadly force by law enforcement demand a thorough and impartial examination of the facts. That process exists to ensure that decisions are grounded in evidence and the law, rather than speculation, public pressure, or preconceived conclusions.

"Unfortunately, much of the public discussion surrounding this incident occurred before the investigation was completed and before all of the relevant facts were known. While public scrutiny of law enforcement is both appropriate and necessary, accountability must be grounded in a fair and objective assessment of the evidence. Officers, like the members of the communities they serve, deserve nothing less.

"While the facts and circumstances of this incident necessarily guide today's determination, we recognize the profound loss that Mr. Ruiz's death represents to his family and loved ones, as well as the significant impact this incident has had on the broader Madison community. We appreciate that a finding that an officer's actions were legally justified does not diminish that loss or the grief experienced by those affected.

"We also recognize the extraordinary toll this incident has taken on the officers involved and their families. These officers cooperated with the independent investigation while enduring intense

public scrutiny, threats, and personal harassment. Regardless of one's views about this incident, threats against officers or their families are unacceptable and have no place in a community committed to public safety and the rule of law.

"As Madison moves forward, we hope today's announcement provides an opportunity to replace division and speculation with a more constructive dialogue about public safety, accountability, and the difficult realities confronting law enforcement officers. The WPPA remains committed to supporting its members and strengthening the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

"We will carefully review the district attorney's findings and will be prepared to address additional questions as appropriate."

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About the WPPA: The Wisconsin Professional Police Association is Wisconsin's largest law enforcement labor organization, representing more than 11,000 members through more than 300 local associations statewide.