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Statement from Commissioner Joe Masters

(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) — Due to accusations that have played out in the media regarding the Sherry Johnston, the Commissioner of Public Safety has issued the following statement:

Politics did not play a role in the decisions made by me or AST leadership during the management of the Johnston case. Events nationally, and their affects locally, certainly may have influenced Ms. Johnston's behaviors and ultimately the timeline of the case. However, the accusations that political motives were behind the decision on how to manage this case are baseless.

I gave two orders to AST regarding this case: keep me apprised of the progress of the case and be sure to advise me when the search warrant is served and/or when the arrest of Ms. Johnston occurs.

There were no notifications made to the Governor's Office regarding this investigation until the arrest of Ms. Johnston was made and the main aspects of the investigation were concluded. There was absolutely no influence from the Governor's Office on any aspect of the investigation. At no time was the Governor's Office made privy to the details encompassed in this case and in no way did the Governor's Office counsel DPS on how to proceed the investigation. The reason for contacting the Governor's Office was to make it aware of the inevitable media frenzy that would ensue due to the loose connection between Governor Palin and Ms. Johnston.

I do believe that through the judicial process it will be clear to the public that AST leadership did everything it could to ensure that this case was investigated and handled as any other similar case. The service of the search warrant was not delayed because of the election. The warrant was obtained on Dec. 2, 2008 — well after the November election.

I have hopes that this administration can work together with PSEA to resolve disputes. We certainly would have been open to communications with the union regarding its perceptions of this case if it had come forward with its concerns.

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