



COUNTY OF FRESNO

Lisa A. Smittcamp
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 17, 2021

District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp Committed to Transparency in Cases Involving Officer Richard Fitzgerald

Upon learning of the allegations that Fresno Police Department Officer Richard “Rick” Fitzgerald was recently a member of the Proud Boys, an organization that the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated as a “hate group,” the Fresno County District Attorney’s Office has proactively taken steps to identify all cases involving Officer Fitzgerald.

According to District Attorney Smittcamp, “It’s important that every citizen in the County of Fresno trust that members of our law enforcement community will behave equitably and free from biases when investigating, evaluating and prosecuting cases. To the extent that Officer Fitzgerald’s alleged affiliations, publicly available statements, social media posts or observed conduct undermine that public trust is of grave concern. I am committed to working with the Fresno Police Department, the Fresno County Public Defender, all members of the criminal defense bar, and the courts in addressing these concerns and the impact it may have on any cases.”

As has been made public elsewhere, the Fresno Police Department has placed Officer Fitzgerald on administrative leave pending a departmental “internal affairs” investigation. Such investigations do not involve the Fresno County District Attorney’s Office. Outcomes of internal affairs investigations are generally subject to privacy rights established by statute. Because the law affords this confidentiality, findings are not automatically shared with either party to a criminal case. However, once an investigation is complete, legal process does allow parties to a criminal case to seek information, with agreement and input from the court, about the investigation and any findings. It is anticipated that this procedure will be utilized as appropriate in matters involving Officer Fitzgerald.

The Media may email FCDAMedia@fresnocountyca.gov with questions.
