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With recent world events, there has been an increased focus on Peace and Police Officers in British Columbia and around North America. The result has been debate on funding models for law enforcement activities, alternate responses to mental health emergencies, police oversight and general policing practices.

Unfortunately, there has also been an increase in statements and positions not based on empirical evidence or fact, but on an emotional response. The level of negativity towards peace and police officers in British Columbia has also risen dramatically, including social media postings, protests and verbal abuse at police officer's places of work and even activities that, at any other place of employment or public space, would be considered inappropriate at best and harassment by most.

While we do not condone racism or abuse of power, vilifying the men and women who put on a uniform every day and are asked to protect citizens and promote order is not productive, nor beneficial in addressing the issues. The overwhelming majority of peace and police officers go to work every day to serve and protect in extremely difficult and challenging work environments with integrity and pride.

The Ambulance Paramedics and Emergency Dispatchers of BC have had a close working relationship and bond with peace and police officers since the creation of the BC Ambulance Service in 1974. Multiple times every day, they assist and protect us on calls, many of which are related to mental health emergencies. While we have always advocated for greater access to mental health and addictions professionals for patients in crisis, the fact is, many of these calls are volatile and potentially violent and require law enforcement intervention for everyone's protection. One only needs to look at the specialized units in BC policing that utilize a specially trained medical professional paired with a police officer and the successes of those units.

Peace and Police officers have protected us, served alongside us and supported us during our darkest times. These women and men are integral to a safe and just society and do not deserve to all be stereotyped in a negative way based on the actions of a few.

It is a difficult job to be a police officer in the best of times, and right now, police forces are facing unprecedented negativity.

We are thankful and grateful of their service and believe the public should be as well.

Provincial Executive Board
Ambulance Paramedics & Emergency Dispatchers of BC
CUPE Local 873/873-02

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