

Dear Mayor Curry and Sheriff Williams,

Where do I begin? My family and I are horrified by the daily news reports about shootings around Jacksonville, even in broad daylight. It is totally shocking. Do we need to call in the National Guard to ensure citizen safety? Jacksonville is a WAR ZONE and NO ONE seems to care - certainly not you. It is not just in one neighborhood. That is a myth. The hood is everywhere. The citation system for youth offenders is not working. Dangerous, violent students must be arrested.

Honestly, my family, my neighbors, my friends, and my acquaintances do not care about developing downtown, or the Jaguars. Nothing matters if citizens do not feel safe. My friends and family cannot believe it when candidates running for public office claim the crime rate is at all-time 47 year low. Do people think everyone is smoking dope? Or that we are brain dead. It is not fair that people may have to live in gated communities to feel safe.

I guess the only thing McDonalds can do is hire a full time police officer for every site. That's what Navy Federal Credit Union and VyStar Credit Union have done. They have full time officers every day during the business day. I guess IHOP will have to hire full time security, too.

If you think the nation is not watching how bad and unsafe Jacksonville has become, you are sadly mistaken. Jacksonville is right up there with Baltimore, Detroit, and Chicago. Just where is the police presence? I never see any patrol cars in the community. If I do, I see two patrol cars parked in a wooden area and the officers seem to be visiting. Maybe, the JSO officers are just so under siege with CRISIS, they have to rest before the next horrendous incident that they have to handle. Perhaps, JSO officers have given up. Maybe they are afraid of all the scrutiny they will endure if they give someone a ticket or pull someone over. Maybe they are afraid they will be accused of racial profiling. Maybe, they are tired of their tickets or reports being thrown out in court. Maybe, they are trying to get just enough experience to apply for another law enforcement position with another department that provides more defined pension benefits and better pay. That's what happens when defined pension plans are replaced with 401K Investment plans. Maybe if we used the money the city gives to Shad Khan and other developers and invested it in the retirement plans, the city could hire permanent JSO officers and not have such a revolving door.

All I know is that there seems to be no police presence and driving around Jacksonville is a death defying stunt. The drivers tailgate, speed, illegally pass and are downright rude. Road rage is epidemic. They are driving distracted and many have tinted windows. Are tinted windows legal?

Gentlemen, you signed up for very difficult jobs. I suggest, if you are unable to deliver public safety that both of you consider handing in your resignations today. Public Safety is the most important job of government. The truth is Jacksonville is too big and Consolidated Jacksonville is simply not working. The public is poorly served with this model. It is a disgrace when the Mayor has to show up to try to patch pot holes around the city. I have lived in Jacksonville for many years and I have to say that I have never seen the city in a more deplorable condition. Blight is common place. The roads are full of potholes and are beyond capacity. Power outages are common and JEA closes a power plant and demolishes two coal burning towers that cost the taxpayers 1.55 billion dollars back in 1987 and were supposed to last until 2087. What about redundant power? Citizens do not trust government or their appointed boards. Guess what? I am not black and I am a registered Republican. I do not care about party affiliation. I care about results. I care about living in a safe community. Nothing else matters. Jacksonville is a hell hole and everyone knows it. Hope both of you has a plan. I am not holding my breath. If you think tearing down a bridge ramp is progress, Heaven help us. I am praying for you and for the citizens of Jacksonville and their children. I do represent how many voters feel in Consolidated Jacksonville, and most of us do not believe the City Council is capable of anything. It just does not work. If the citizens were teachers, both of you would get an F grade. Since this is not an election year, consider this letter a progress report. Maybe, just maybe you can come up with a plan to improve public safety and your grade which is your approval rating. Jacksonville is in CRISIS.

Sincerely,

Very Concerned Citizen – The Voice of the Silent Majority

Aug 1, 2018  
CITIZEN