

PRESS RELEASE



Assembly Acting Chair Constant Statement on Centennial Park Shooting

July 21, 2022

Following a shooting at Centennial Park campground last night, July 20, 2022, in which a police officer and one other person sustained serious injuries following an exchange of gunfire, Acting Assembly Chair Christopher Constant offered the following statement to the community:

My heart goes out to everyone affected by this horrible incident – the officer who was injured, and who thankfully is recovering now, and their family, the people camping at the park who have already faced so much trauma and hardship, the volunteers and community organizations who are working around the clock to address this humanitarian crisis, and everyone in our community who is watching this disaster unfold.

This situation is untenable and something must be done to provide safe, permanent, and sustainable housing for the most vulnerable in our community. I look forward to supporting the housing plan brought forward by Members Rivera, Perez-Verdia and Volland. If funding for their plan is approved, we will have 300 units of housing available by winter.

However, their housing plan is not an immediate solution and I implore the mayor and his team to muster all available municipal resources to fix the problem immediately by securing safe shelter for those who have been moved by the Municipality to Centennial Park. For the first time in more than a decade we have unsheltered families with children.

In the meantime, I thank all of those in the community who are responding to help our fellow neighbors in need. Volunteers are living and visiting the camp to help. Social service agencies and their donors like Beans Café, RurAL CAP, Catholic Social Services, and the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness are providing food and basic services. George Martinez and the Northeast Community Council are keeping the focus on this issue. Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department staff are doing the lion's work of providing order, Anchorage Fire and Police department officers are working hard to keep the campground safe, and the Anchorage Health Department is doing the best they can by stopping other projects to focus on this issue. Countless community members and organizations have held clothing drives, donated food and supplies, and volunteered

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valuable time. For all you have done to provide support to our most vulnerable neighbors, the leaders of this city owe you and our Centennial Park neighbors action on this issue.

This humanitarian crisis is showing the best and worst of Anchorage and I have faith that by coming together and working collaboratively, we can address this crisis and do better for our community.

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