



February 17, 2026

To: Raymon Grogan, Marion County Prosecutor Marion County Prosecutor's Office

From: Joel M. Spitzer, Spitzer Law Offices, on behalf of Defendant, Brenden Damron

Re: Request for Recusal of the Marion County Sheriff's Office from Investigation Involving Marion City Police Officer Brenden Damron

Sheriff Bayles:

I write on behalf of Brend to respectfully request that the Marion County Sheriff's Office recuse itself from any investigation—administrative or criminal—concerning Marion City Police Officer Brenden Damron, and that the matter be referred to an independent and unbiased investigative authority. This request is made to ensure the integrity and public confidence in the investigative process and to avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest.

As you are aware, the appearance and reality of impartiality are essential to law enforcement functions, particularly when one agency is called upon to investigate personnel from another local agency with which it works closely. Regular interagency collaboration in Marion County, including joint operations, mutual aid, shared resources, and routine professional relationships, creates at minimum a reasonable perception that your office's neutrality could be questioned by the public if the Sheriff's Office were to conduct or oversee the investigation of Officer Damron.

Ohio law imposes duties of impartial enforcement and obligates law enforcement officers and agencies to avoid conflicts that could compromise objective decision-making or erode public trust. Several provisions of the Ohio Revised Code address conflicts of interest, ethical responsibilities of public officials and employees, and the necessity that public business be conducted free from undue influence and bias. These include statutory directives that public officials and employees refrain from actions where conflicts are present or reasonably perceived and that agencies maintain public confidence through impartial performance of duties. In addition, the Ohio Revised Code provides for interagency cooperation and the referral or assignment of investigations to other competent authorities to preserve impartiality where appropriate.

Given these principles and requirements, recusal here is warranted. The Sheriff's Office and the Marion City Police Department's intertwined responsibilities within the same county law enforcement ecosystem could give rise to concerns that witnesses, evidence handling, charging recommendations, or discretionary decisions might be

influenced—consciously or not—by ongoing professional relationships. Even absent an actual conflict, the reasonable perception of bias is sufficient to undermine community confidence in any outcome.

Accordingly, we request that you:

1. Formally recuse the Marion County Sheriff's Office, including all divisions and personnel, from any role in investigating Officer Brenden Damron.
2. Promptly refer the investigation to an independent investigative authority outside Marion County—such as a neighboring county sheriff's office, an independent task force, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, or another suitable agency with no material connection to Officer Damron or the Marion City Police Department—so as to preserve impartiality and public trust.
3. Provide written confirmation of the recusal and referral, including the receiving agency and a point of contact, before presentation to the Grand Jury.

We make this request to safeguard the integrity of the process, protect the rights of all involved, and ensure the community's confidence that the investigation will be conducted fairly, thoroughly, and without actual or perceived conflicts.

Please advise in writing of your decision at your earliest convenience. Should you require any additional information, I am available to discuss this matter promptly.

Respectfully,

Joel M. Spitzer