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Sheriff's Statement on Jamal Sutherland Settlement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 26, 2021

(North Charleston, SC) Today I am grateful to learn the Charleston County Council has approved a settlement with the family of Jamal Sutherland that will hopefully provide some measure of comfort in the midst of their grief. I understand that the community and family have questions regarding the nature of Mr. Sutherland's death, and I am hopeful that my office's participation and support of this resolution will demonstrate my own continued resolve in trying to bring some peace to this family.

As you know, the involved officers are no longer working with the Charleston County Sheriff's Office. We have fully cooperated with SLED and the Solicitor as they have separately investigated this matter. To some degree, I have held back on public communications until I could be confident that they would not damage the integrity of internal and external investigations. I am committed to ensuring that justice can be obtained in this, and in all, matters.

I have taken responsibility for this incident. This was a disastrous set of circumstances that led to the unfortunate loss of Jamal Sutherland. More importantly, I have taken this opportunity to assess our own practices and resources and to begin working on changes that could improve our services and support our mission. I have strived, since my first day in office, to serve the community while continuing to provide a safe environment, excellent law enforcement services and—always—to seek to promote mutual trust and respect with our community.

Our law enforcement community will continue to work to develop a model design that is beneficial to treating mental illness with continuum of care, therefore having less negative impacts on our community. I welcome the public's input as we look for better solutions. Accordingly, if they so desire, the Sutherland family shall have a seat at the table for those continued discussions.

My actions, in supporting this settlement, are intended to ensure that this family will be supported in the wake of this tragedy. Again, I offer my deepest sympathies to the family of Mr. Sutherland.

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