



Public Statement

Captain Neil Weaver
Government and Media Relations

Chris Loftis, Communications Director

Office (360) 596-4013

Cell (360) 485-3983

Chris.Loftis@wsp.wa.gov

October 15, 2021

A Statement **from the Family of Trooper Detective** **Eric Gunderson**

As you know, our family was recently devastated by the loss of our beloved husband and father, Eric Gunderson to the Covid -19 virus.

The loss of this good man was made no easier knowing that there have literally been hundreds of thousands of other families across our nation and millions around the world who have suffered similar losses. Our family wishes for each of those other families and loved ones peace during their own time of grief.

Eric was a young man. At 38, he was in the peak physical condition necessary to perform his duties as a member of the Washington State Patrol S.W.A.T. team. He was active with his boys, with coaching, and with his job. He thought - we all thought - that Covid was something that happened to someone else. He was not in a high risk group. He contracted the virus while traveling for work this summer, a trip planned before the dangers of the Delta variant were fully understood, when many travel restrictions had been reduced and there was a sense that Covid was in decline.

After he returned from his trip, he became very sick, very quickly. He was hospitalized and died some six weeks later. At roughly the same time as his work travel, Governor Inslee issued a vaccine mandate for all state employees. Eric was a loyal member of the Washington State Patrol and took an oath to follow the legal directives of the Governor. We are quite sure he would have followed the vaccine mandate direction had he had the chance. Unfortunately, he did not.

It is important for everyone to know, he was not a part of any anti-vaccine or political movement. Some in the media have inaccurately claimed he was a part of anti-vaccine mandate lawsuits, etc. He was not. There has been wide speculation about his perspectives on vaccination. We have not followed the comments on social media but I am told that many have been critical of our beloved Eric. How sad it is that people would feel compelled to criticize a good man they did not know about a situation with which they are not familiar.

Our family would have preferred to let this painful part of a painful time pass, but recently, the Seattle Times made an official public disclosure request regarding Eric's vaccination status to WSP. The Patrol has honored our family's wishes to keep Eric's passing out of the political realm and to concentrate on his life of service and sacrifice. They have declined to answer similar questions from multiple media outlets since Eric's passing. To end this painful and continuing line of inquiry, we will now share our family's private medical information - Eric Gunderson was simply a good man, busy with life, and suddenly sickened by Covid before he could be vaccinated. He died and every member of our young family will miss him every day for the rest of our lives.

His death is a tragedy. It is not a symbol. It is not a statement. It is not a part of one side's argument over another side's argument. It is simply the loss of a fine husband, a wonderful father, and a busy young man to Covid. That is enough drama for our family. Please respect our family's privacy and do not add to the tragedy of our loss with further questions about Eric's medical history.

Thank you.

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