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## Lafayette mayor addresses concerns on overpass protest tensions

By Pippa Fisher



Trump supporters on the overpass Jan. 15. Photo Pippa Fisher

as a city, can implement concerning events on the El Curtola overpass. I can say with full confidence that the response by our police department has been appropriate and timely. When violations of the law have been reported, including allegations of assault, the police department has made arrests and our judicial system is processing these matters."

Noting that peaceful forms of protest in public spaces are a bedrock of democracy, Candell said that First Amendment rights must be upheld for everyone, both those living in Lafayette and those who come to Lafayette to express their views.

Addressing calls for the overpass to be closed, Candell said, "Under the law, however, we cannot do this and prohibit lawful protests. Likewise, the city cannot limit access to the overpass to only residents, as has been suggested. All members of the public, no matter where they live, have the right to peacefully assemble on the overpass. If the City of Lafayette were to hinder those rights, it could expose the city to significant legal challenges and, perhaps, make Lafayette a focal point for future protests."

Candell said the city, working with the police will continue to monitor events and will make arrests should any law be violated.

"Let us all do our part to uphold the First Amendment and to deescalate a sensitive situation," said Candell, closing out the statement. "I know that nerves are frayed. But we must come together to ensure that our democracy functions peacefully and respectfully."

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