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October 17, 2019

Kevin Neal
Marshall County Judge Executive
1101 Main Street
Benton, KY 42025

Dear Judge Neal:

I have seen your letter to Attorney General Andy Beshear regarding the tragic shooting at Marshall County High School. Given that I was the County Attorney at this time, and was the initial prosecutor on the case, I wish you would have called me before sending your letter.

Attorney General Andy Beshear came to our courthouse within 48 hours of the shooting, on January 25, 2018. This was the date of one of the initial hearings in the prosecution of the case. The Attorney General met with the Commonwealth Attorney, myself, and my staff. While he was at the courthouse, I personally walked him to the grand jury room, where he met with a roomful of the impacted families that were at the courthouse for the hearing that day. He told the families his office would provide every resource that was needed. He and I both answered questions from the families. One father specifically said he needed us to be their voice in the courtroom. As he was leaving, the Attorney General had an opportunity to talk to the press, but told me that he was here to help, not talk to reporters.

Beginning that same afternoon, the Attorney General's Office began providing legal help in terms of additional research and help from his prosecutors. They also sent his office's victim's advocates to Benton, where they worked with my office, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, and the Purchase Area Rape Crisis Center (which helped coordinate crisis services). We specifically asked for and used their help for later meetings with the families around court dates. A member of the Attorney General's Survivor's Council, who had survived the Paducah shooting decades earlier, also provided assistance.

Everything the Attorney General said in his debate was true. I know because I was there on January 25, 2018. What families can remember in a time of trauma or whether they recognized someone as a member of my office or as the Attorney General is understandable. Let's not put these families in this situation.

Sincerely,



Former Marshall County Attorney
Jeffrey G. Edwards

JGE/lu

cc: Andy Beshear
Attorney General