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State Attorney Bain Releases Statement on Bruce Stolk Case

ORANGE COUNTY, Fla. – State Attorney Andrew A. Bain released the following statement regarding the Bruce Stolk case:

“The decision to drop the aggravated battery charge against Bruce Stolk brings to light deeply troubling ethical concerns with the previous administration's handling of this case. While we are unable to prove the charge beyond a reasonable doubt, it is also abundantly clear this criminal charge never should have been pursued after a thorough evaluation of the facts, evidence, a review of Florida law and the ethical rules that guide prosecutors.

“The previous administration’s reliance on Stolk's unreliable statement, despite glaring inconsistencies with evidence, reflects a disregard for the pursuit of truth and justice. Their failure to promptly address Stolk's false statements and pursue appropriate charges for two years allowed the statute of limitations to expire, leaving us unable to file any criminal charges against Stolk at this time. A law enforcement officer's conduct must be above reproach and even though Stolk’s actions do not constitute a provable crime I do not believe he is blameless. Per the Orange County Sheriff’s Office’s standard procedures now that the criminal case is closed, they will conduct an internal investigation. We look forward to the results of OCSO’s internal investigation into Stolk’s actions and his truthfulness.

“There are dangers when prosecutors seek a specific end rather than an objective presentation of the evidence in the interest of furthering justice. As prosecutors, we have special obligations that other attorneys do not, including working as ministers of justice. We promise to uphold ethical rules and regulations that govern prosecutors, including the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar. Florida Bar Rules 4-3.8 and 4-3.3 impose upon a prosecutor the duty to present all material facts known to the lawyer to a grand jury and that was not done in this case.

“It is my sincere hope the prior administration’s actions in this case do not erode the public’s trust in the legal system. According to the American Bar Association’s Criminal Justice Standards, prosecutors must seek justice within the bounds of the law and should act with integrity and balanced judgment by pursuing appropriate criminal charges of appropriate severity and exercising discretion to not pursue criminal charges in appropriate circumstances all in the interest of increasing public safety.

“Under my leadership, this office aims to fulfill that promise and be as transparent as legally possible during the process so the public may hold us accountable.”

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