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PRESS RELEASE

DATE: December 16, 2016
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CONTACT: Joe DeCecco/(920) 459-3040
**RE: DA Calls On Gun Organizations To Keep
Firearms Out of the Hands of the Mentally Ill**

Sheboygan County District Attorney Joe DeCecco called on local and national gun organizations to use their considerable political power to support legislation banning anyone with a diagnosed mental health condition from ever possessing a firearm, and to ensure that federal and state background checks include such information so that otherwise legal purchases of firearms will be denied.

DeCecco points to a case recently issued in Sheboygan County where a 21 year old male was arrested and charged with terrorist threats for comments concerning school shootings on his Facebook page.

“Prompted by a Crime Stoppers anonymous tip, police accessed the Facebook page and were confronted by a series of posts talking how it would be ‘funny’ for Sheboygan to have a school shooting, as well as the poster commenting that he lives by the gun, will die by the gun and will die with a gun in his hand,” DeCecco said. “An execution of a search warrant resulted in the seizure of a metallic rear sight aperture for an assault-style rifle; 299 rounds of .22 caliber ammunition; and a Mossberg International .22 caliber assault-style rifle as well as various electronic devices. During an interview subsequent to his arrest, the subject admitted to making the posts and, when asked what police would find in his electronic data, stated they would find videos of ISIS beheadings and bombings, videos of school shootings (with Columbine as his favorite), and that he viewed these videos to relieve his ‘stress’ so he wouldn’t go out and shoot people.”

This subject is believed to have a history of schizophrenic and bipolar disorders, yet apparently passed a background check when he purchased the rifle and ammunition from a Sheboygan sporting goods store on the day of his arrest, according to DeCecco. “I’m sorry that this person appears to have significant mental health problems, but this is someone who should *never* be allowed to legally possess a firearm,” DeCecco stated. “Every constitutional right has exceptions, and this should be one of the more reasonable and sensible ones to the Second Amendment. Fortunately, someone who viewed these postings recognized the deadly danger and contacted police.”

“I realize that many persons with mental health conditions live full, productive and law-abiding lives with medication,” DeCecco continued, “but too many times in my 27 years as a prosecutor have I seen many, for whatever reason, stop

taking their medication and experience a rapid downward spiral into the depths of their condition, incapable of making rational decisions. Adding legal possession of a firearm into that scenario is like lighting a fuse to an explosive.”

END