



# Saint Paul Police Federation and Law Enforcement Labor Services **MEDIA ADVISORY**



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## Metro Gang Strike Force Officers “Outed” Federation and LELS join forces in prosecuting data practices violation

The St. Paul Police Federation and Law Enforcement Labor Services served the MN Department of Public Safety, the Metro Gang Strike Force and MGSF Commander Chris Omodt with a lawsuit on May 7, 2009, in response to one of these defendants releasing the names of six MGSF officers to the Star Tribune in violation of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

The officers' names appeared in print on April 5, after Commander Omodt gave a Star Tribune reporter a lengthy interview on the subject of these six officers attending training in Hawaii in March, a trip Omodt called “ridiculous”.

The MGSF Board approved the training, which was funded wholly with seizure money.

The MGDPA, Minnesota Statute section 13.43, Subd. 5, states that all personnel data maintained by a government entity relating to an individual employed as an undercover law enforcement officer are “private data on individuals”. Such data may not be released to the public.

The MGSF's mission is to identify, investigate, arrest and prosecute gang members engaged in criminal activity in Minnesota. Many MGSF officers, including the six the Star Tribune identified, perform undercover work on a regular and ongoing basis in order to accomplish this mission.

Someone--either the Board, or someone on the Board, someone at the DPS, or Omodt--broke the law by releasing this data and has put the personal safety of these officers and their families at risk, and compromised the officers' ability to perform undercover investigations for the MGSF.

If they did this intentionally, they have subjected themselves to criminal liability under the MGDPA, which makes a willful violation of the Act a misdemeanor.

The six officers represent four agencies, and are named as “John Does No. 1-5, and Jane Doe” in the lawsuit. All are Federation or LELS members. The MGDPA allows for civil penalties (damages), as well as recovery of costs and attorney's fees. Minn stat sec. 13.08 Subd. 1.

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