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METRO NEWS BRIEFS: NEW JERSEY

METRO NEWS BRIEFS: NEW JERSEY; Coalition Seeks to Oust Officer Accused of Slur

SPRINGFIELD— A coalition of civic and religious leaders called yesterday for the dismissal of a Springfield police officer who is accused of using anti-Semitic language in a taped telephone call made to police headquarters last month.

The coalition, made up of the Springfield Human Rights Commission, the Springfield Clergy Council and the Anti-Defamation League of New Jersey, said that the officer, Capt. Vernon Pedersen, should be dismissed because the derogatory language he used proves that he cannot perform his job fairly, said Shai Goldstein, regional director for the Anti-Defamation League.

On the tape, recorded on March 10, an unidentified police officer is heard using an anti-Semitic epithet to refer to Lieut. Ivan Shapow, a Jewish officer who serves under Captain Pedersen's command.

On Monday, Mayor Sy Mullman of Springfield suspended a police officer without pay but refused to name the officer or specify the charges. But John Young, a lawyer for Captain Pedersen, a 30-year veteran, acknowledged yesterday that his client was the officer who was suspended.

Mr. Young said that dismissal was too harsh a punishment even if the charges were true.

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