

On Friday morning, Donald Trump released a very un-Trumpian statement on the tragedy in Dallas. The six paragraphs include no reference to the potential political motives of those who killed five police officers and injured seven more. He doesn't suggest that anti-police rhetoric could have caused such violence, as he has before. And he doesn't boast about having predicted that such an event would occur, as he did after the mass shooting in Orlando last month.

But what's missing may be less notable than one word that does appear: "senseless."

After addressing the police deaths in Dallas, Trump also notes the deaths of two black men shot and killed by police in Louisiana and Minnesota this week - events that led to demonstrations like the one in Dallas where the officers were killed.

"The senseless, tragic deaths of two motorists in Louisiana and Minnesota reminds us how much more needs to be done," Trump says.

The Oxford Dictionary defines "senseless," in the context of violence, as meaning "without discernible meaning or purpose."

Whether Trump's campaign intended it that way or not, it suggests there was no "discernible meaning or purpose" for the deaths of Alton Sterling in Louisiana and Philando Castile in Minnesota. That's something demonstrators protesting police violence would certainly agree with; it's a word law enforcement probably wouldn't use to describe the deaths, which will be the subject of investigations that will officially determine whether there was any justification for the shootings.

And some are taking issue with Trump's word choice.

Trump's statement appears somewhat haphazard. He refers to Sterling and Castile as motorists, for example, when in fact only Castile was killed operating a vehicle, and he also labels the Dallas killings "execution-style," which at least one but not all of the shootings appear to have been. But the use of the word "senseless" here is clearly meant to try to empathize with a side of the political debate Trump has often clashed with.

It's also, notably, the first time this week Trump has addressed the deaths of Sterling and Castile.

We've lost track of all the times the Trump campaign was supposed to be pivoting toward the general election and adjusting its tone. This statement represents both a sharp pivot and a starkly different tone.

But "senseless" is a very loaded word in what is a very heated political debate over police violence. And it's not loaded in the political direction in which Trump generally veers.

The full Trump statement is below:

"Last night's horrific execution-style shootings of 12 Dallas law enforcement officers - five of whom were killed and seven wounded - is an attack on our country. It is a coordinated, premeditated assault on the men and women who keep us safe.

"We must restore law and order. We must restore the confidence of our people to be safe and secure in their homes and on the street.

"The senseless, tragic deaths of two motorists in Louisiana and Minnesota reminds us how much more needs to be done."