

Dear Pete Holmes and Dan Satterberg,

We write to demand that both of your offices, the City Attorney's Office and the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, drop all charges and not file any additional charges subsequently against those targeted and arrested by the various police departments, including the Seattle Police Department, during the George Floyd protests starting from May 29th to the present.

From May 29th to early weeks of June, the Seattle Police Department, with support from Renton, Bellevue, Burien, King County Sheriff's Office and other departments across the county, engaged in reckless and dangerous retaliation against everyday people to repress protests. As of early morning, July 2, 2020, the Seattle Police Department has arrested up to 65 protesters and used mace, rubber bullets and other violent means to push people out of CHOP, the Capitol Hill Occupied Protest at the East Precinct. They denied press access, threatened to arrest reporters, knelt on the necks of protesters, and also continued the cowardly act of covering their badges while enacting such violence. This overt and public display of brutality is characteristic of police conduct since May 29th, aimed at repressing the #BlackLivesMatter uprising.

We have recently learned that the arrested protesters are being interviewed by the FBI while they are held in police custody. Though they are presented as "informal" interviews, the coercive effect of these interviews cannot be underestimated, especially because they are presented at a time of extreme vulnerability and distress for the arrestees. Sending in the FBI to interview protesters has a chilling effect on free speech, and thus is a violation of the First Amendment rights. Such blatant collaboration between local law enforcement and Trump's federal law enforcement further signals the depth of both your office's hypocrisy in supporting protester's right to free speech.

The rebellion in Seattle is a local manifestation of a nationwide uprising driven by outrage at the unceasing murder, violence, and oppression of Black People (relentlessly perpetrated, generation after generation, by the police). In King County, during the last ten years alone, police have killed, among others: John T. Williams, Charleena Lyles, Che Taylor, Demarius Butts, Oscar Perez Giron, Renee Davis, MiChance Dunlap Gittens, Tommy Lee, Shaun Fuhr and Marcello Castellano.

Dan Satterberg: **Your office has not charged a SINGLE officer for these killings.**

Instead, both of your offices insist on driving a wedge between what is being framed as "good" and "peaceful" protesters, and what you claim are "violent" "non-peaceful" protesters. Both of you have released public statements declaring support for the #BlackLivesMatter movement by dropping charges against what you perceive to be "peaceful" and "non-violent" protests while continuing to persecute other responses to state violence.

Your actions criminalize the righteous rage of Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) communities, by declaring some kinds of protests legitimate and legal. You then isolate other acts, predominantly damages on property, as illegal and dangerous. In the meantime, you provide cover for law enforcement, police terror, and state sanctioned violence.

To add insult to injury, your offices are participating in the continued violence against BIPOC individuals and communities. On January 16, 2020 the Seattle City Attorney's office filed a lawsuit against King County's attempts to hold community reviews, otherwise known as inquest proceedings, around the deaths of community members like Damarius Butts, Isaiah Obet, and Charleena Lyles and any other individuals killed by police officers in King County. It wasn't until June 9, 2020 after weeks of political protests against police violence, that the Seattle City Attorney's office dismissed its lawsuit. However, by then other law enforcement agencies had joined Seattle's lawsuit and now the challenge that Seattle started to the inquest process still continues.

Your offices are part of a broader system of racist repression toward BIPOC communities. Apart from your condonement of police murders in the City and County, your offices also play a role in preventing Inquests procedures from proceeding.

In addition, queer and trans individuals have been known to be severely mistreated in the King County Jail. Trans, genderqueer and non binary individuals are incarcerated in solitary confinement simply for their gender expression and identity.

The violence of the jail, the police and the criminal legal system that your offices oversee, is immensely more disruptive, dangerous and harmful to human life than the property damage that some protesters may have done in the last month.

We demand that all charges be dropped against all protestors. Specifically, cases should also be closed to prevent future attempts to file them. Additionally, no new charges should be filed against the protestors. Instead, we ask you to show your real support for the #BlackLivesMatter movement by holding police accountable for violence against residents.

Signed,

Decriminalize Seattle
COVID 19 Mutual Aid
No New Youth Jail
& other community organizations and individual partners