

Sent to Police and Fire commission 'PoliceChiefSearch@cityofmadison.com' on 7/28/2020  
**Re: Input from Voces de la Frontera-Madison on the recruitment of a new police chief in Madison**

Voces de la Frontera is a national leader in the movement for immigrant and worker rights and the largest grassroots Latinx membership organization in Wisconsin with ten chapters statewide, including Madison. It is led by low-wage workers, immigrants and youth with a mission to protect and expand civil rights and workers' rights primarily through leadership development, community organizing, and collective empowerment. Our movement is driven by an affirmation of our human dignity.

We advocate for and stand together with people of all races and walks of life in our vision for a new Wisconsin and a new country – a country that lives up to its mantra of delivering justice for all.

In acknowledgement that we live in one of the cities with greatest racial inequities in the country, and as related to the search for a new police chief in Madison, we advocate for the need for a chief with strong moral character that will resist the forces of systemic racism exacerbated under the Trump administration. We need a person of moral character who will instead support the current historic moment to transform the work of police by engaging meaningfully with the community, and who will actively promote civil and human rights.

More specifically, as an organization that supports the rights of undocumented workers and their families in Wisconsin, Voces de la Frontera advocates for a chief of police that must support sanctuary policies protecting undocumented communities and also support the restoration of licenses and IDs for undocumented immigrants.

#### **A. Support sanctuary policies protecting undocumented communities**

We appreciate that this is the current policy for the police department in Madison as we clearly advocate for NO police cooperation with federal immigration agencies (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) without a judicial warrant. In addition, we want a police chief who will not promote or allow the training of civilians as deputized ICE agents as is being allowed in other cities. This would clearly augment racial profiling, harassment of people of color and facilitate hate crimes.

We appreciate the support of interim chief Wahl on this issue. He has spoken in support of Sanctuary at the Capitol, as there have been several attempts to ban sanctuary cities coming from the WI state legislature. That kind of support builds trust.

Communities at large are safer when there is trust. If people are afraid to call the police when there is an incident because they are afraid of referrals to ICE, that situation can escalate and/or a perpetrator may continue to go on unchecked. This puts everyone's safety at risk.

Fear of ICE stresses undocumented families continuously as they wonder whether they will be torn apart despite living and being an integral part of Madison for years, often decades. As a responsible and moral community, we should not allow circumstances in which our children live

with constant fear of their parents not coming home. This traumatic stress conditions impair children's ability to learn, thrive and grow to their best potential.

If sanctuary is not actively pursued and defended in every instance, family separation, racial profiling and mistrust will grow with consequent weakening of all of our society.

**B. Support the restoration of licenses and IDs for undocumented immigrants.**

Another issue of great importance to us is the restoration of driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants in WI. Their ability to drive lawfully was taken away in 2007 as a result of a bill initiated in the WI state legislature that does not allow renovation of driving licenses for people without a social security number. As you know, life in the US, even in this city with relatively robust public transportation system is very difficult without a car. Families have to drive to the store, take their children to school, church, and work. Lack of driver's permits puts people at great risk if they, for instance, are detained for a broken tail light in a community where police cooperate with ICE. We appreciate the support the Madison police has given us on this issue. Lack of access to driver's licenses is not limited to undocumented individuals, however. Low-income US citizens have also been affected by stringent laws that penalize those who do not have the funds to pay their traffic and parking tickets. In 2016, 60% of license suspensions were due to unpaid fines rather than infractions related to unsafe driving. These harsh practices have disproportionately criminalized Black and Latinx drivers. **Even though the solution to this issue is in the domain of the WI state legislature, support by the new police chief for restoration of licenses is essential for all of us.**

Voces de la Frontera stands with our Black siblings and we advocate for justice for all.

We need a police chief who will:

- listen and meaningfully engage with communities of color;
- promote accountability for Madison police involved in violence against people color;
- immediately release documentation of arrests to the public;
- disavow violence and support de-escalation of force
- support a reduction in their budget for military-style equipment. We are all civilians here and do not see why equipment meant for war is needed to meaningfully listen and engage with us.
- not engage on violent attacks on lawful protesters;
- understand and embrace this historic moment challenging institutionalized racism;
- support the redirection of funds from their budget to community supports – this is vital.

We ask that all decision-makers in Madison actually do something different from what's been in place for the hundreds of years in this country. We ask that you support the Black community with funds to make reparations, and funds to allow them to finally thrive. As the old saying goes, to keep doing the same thing and expect a different result is insane, and in this case, thoroughly immoral.

Thank for the opportunity to provide our input into the process of recruiting a new chief of police for Madison. We hope that the mayor will allocate sufficient time and resources as needed to find the candidate that will enable and promote the supports and changes we seek for a Madison that is safe and equitable for everyone.

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