

No person, institution, or organization is above the law or reproach. The evening of August 23rd, 2020 in Kenosha, Wisconsin is another example of the utter failure to address, in earnest, the crisis confronting our Black communities in Wisconsin. It has shown us all yet another example of how the continued failure to act falls on the lives of the communities whom the state of Wisconsin is meant to serve. As candidates for the Wisconsin State Legislature, we are calling on a multi-level, coordinated response to immediately address the plague of systemic and institutional violence perpetrated against BIPOC and other marginalized communities, and will hold accountable, through a coalition of common interests, those persons, entities, and institutional bodies that fail to move forward actionable solutions to aid the situation in this moment.

We are past the point of studies on public health initiatives, band-aid reforms, or the theatrical creation of Special Sessions that will be gaveled in and out without consideration by the current State Legislature. Systemic racism is a public health crisis, and should be declared as such. Therefore, we must reimagine, rework and reconfigure a new, more equitable, anti-racist infrastructure. Proactive solutions by entities outside of law enforcement, including municipal, county, and state level institutions, community organizations, nonprofits and labor unions should be charged with the reconfiguration of assets and the prioritization of action, legislation and community mobilization.

Together, we stand with protesters and recognize their right to assemble in advocacy for systemic change, while also understanding that the process in and of itself is a necessary act of mourning. We look to our elected officials across all levels of local and state government as well as our diverse community leaders and members to guide us forward. We will hold accountable our elected officials, including Mayors, City Councils, County Boards and School Boards, and call on them to act immediately to directly dismantle racism and white supremacy as a public health crisis and to take the budgetary and legislative initiatives necessary to immediately suppress any further violence against Black and marginalized communities. Under the purview of Governor Evers and the Wisconsin Constitution, we advise for the use of the immediate removal of any insubordinate, ineffective, or negligent county elected official—including District Attorneys and County Sheriffs, provided to the Governor with authority in [ss.17.001, 17.06 (3), and 17.09 (5), Stats.]

We call on our legislative leaders in both the Assembly and State Senate leadership to demonstrate allyship and solidarity in this moment, and to use their powers to further all proactive steps, including the denouncement of the use of facial recognition surveillance technologies, chemical agents, and violence against peaceful protesters. We stand with EO 84.

We demand transparency and open communication between local Police Unions, their umbrella organizations, and local government officials.

Our commitment to immediate change, calls for a signing of this letter in petition by any person, organization, or institution that stands by this commitment to social justice herein, and calls on all to assemble with us in an immediate and broad coalition to bring together the necessary change now.

Francesca Hong (Assembly Candidate District 76)  
Nada Elmikashfi (Former Senate Candidate District 26)  
Kristina Shelton (Assembly Candidate District 90)

Ed Vocke (Senate Candidate District 12)  
Samba Baldeh (Assembly Candidate District 48)  
Melissa Sargent (Senate Candidate District 16)