



730 Center Street Racine, WI 53403

June 10, 2020

The Honorable Cory Mason
Office of Mayor
City Hall
730 Washington Avenue
Racine, WI 53403

Dear Mayor Mason,

This past weekend, Ms. Angelina Cruz issued a statement on behalf of the Racine Education Association, of which she is the president, to denounce institutional racism, call for the removal of police officers from school district facilities, and implement ethnic studies and anti-bias curricula, among other things. Please find a copy of the REA statement attached.

In her statement, Ms. Cruz asserts that the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis serves as "yet another reminder of the countless other Black men and women, including those in our very own community, who have been executed by white supremacists and the systems constructed by institutional racism: Tyrese West, Dontre Hamilton, Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery, Philando Castile..." The statement closes by quoting Assata Shakur, who was convicted of killing a New Jersey law enforcement officer in 1973, and who remains a fugitive in Cuba. In fact, when Ms. Shakur was added to the FBI's "most wanted terrorist" list by the Obama Administration in 2013, she was the first woman to receive that notorious distinction.

The freedom to express diverse views is fundamental to our democratic system of government, and the dedicated men and women of the Racine Police Association (RPA) and Staff Officers Association (SOA) fully respect the constitutional right of free speech that is guaranteed to all Americans. Nonetheless, our members are greatly offended by the broad brush of white supremacy used by Ms. Cruz in her statement on



730 Center Street Racine, WI 53403

behalf of her union. Additionally, as we approach the one-year anniversary of the line of duty death of Racine Police Officer John Hetland, our members are particularly sensitive to Ms. Cruz's quotation of a convicted cop-killer.

In addition to taking great umbrage to Ms. Cruz's divisive statements, the RPA and SOA have serious concerns about her ability to function as an objective member of the Racine Police & Fire Commission, as required under the law and her oath of office. The public officials charged with overseeing the police department ought to adhere to the same standard of care and conduct that is expected of its officers. By this measure, Ms. Cruz has fallen woefully short.

The RPA and SOA greatly value and welcome the opportunity to maintain a community dialogue on policing issues, and we share the objective of addressing systemic racism and prejudice wherever and however we can. Nonetheless, we fail to see how denigrating the service and sacrifice of all the officers who work tirelessly to keep our city safe helps advance that public discourse – which, we agree, is needed now more than ever.

As your time permits, we respectfully request hearing from you regarding your assessment of this situation, and how we can alleviate the questions and concerns of our officers regarding Ms. Cruz's capacity to serve on the Police & Fire Commission in light of her malicious public statements.

Thank you in advance for considering our views.

Respectfully,

Todd Hoover, President
Racine Police Association

Michael Smith, President
Staff Officers Association



730 Center Street Racine, WI 53403



Racine Education Association and Racine Educational Assistants Association
Racine Educators United
1201 West Boulevard, Racine Wisconsin 53405 • (262) 632-6181 • REA-REAA

Statement in Solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement

The senseless murder of George Floyd serves as yet another reminder of the countless other Black men and women, including those in our very own community, who have been executed by white supremacists and the systems constructed by institutional racism: Tyrese West, Dontre Hamilton, Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery, Philando Castile...

Public schools are the heart of our community, and it is our duty as such to ensure our schools and classrooms are places free from racism, bias, and prejudice.

Racine Educators United (REA-REAA) calls on the Racine Unified School District (RUSD) to clearly denounce institutional racism and the intentional trauma it inflicts on Black communities and acknowledge the role the school system can play in dismantling these gross injustices, rather than perpetuate them.

We call on RUSD to implement ethnic studies and anti-racist curriculums, as well as implicit bias training and professional learning to support our staff, students, and communities of Color. Our students are entitled to a public education that is anti-racist, restorative, and honors their past, present, and future.

We call on RUSD to disrupt the school to prison pipeline by removing police officers from school buildings and replacing them with staff equipped to address trauma and social-emotional learning - more teachers, educational assistants, counselors, social workers, and school psychologists.

And we call on our community to take immediate solidarity action to support the movement for Black lives.

[REU members can take immediate solidarity action to support the movement for Black lives through these Legal Help organizations.](#)

In the words of our great Sister Assata Shakur, *"It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains."*

Love and Solidarity to you all.

Angelina Cruz
REU President