



DANE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ISMAEL R. OZANNE



PRESS RELEASE For Immediate Release

Date: 8-29-2020
Time: 5:15 PM

DANE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR PEACEFUL PROTESTERS AND DENOUNCING THE PRESENCE OF ARMED EXTREMISTS AND GUN VIOLENCE IN THE WAKE OF KENOSHA INCIDENTS

Like many of you, I have followed the events in Kenosha following the police shooting of Jacob Blake. I pray and hope for Mr. Blake's recovery and for the well-being of his children who witnessed the shooting. Wisconsin is lucky to have an Attorney General like Josh Kaul who is committed to truth and to justice and I am confident that under his leadership the Wisconsin Department of Justice will seek exactly that: the truth and a just result. I also commend the Kenosha County District Attorney's Office for its swift work to seek justice on behalf of people shot and murdered during protests following Mr. Blake's death.

I want to thank the many community leaders and citizens who have worked to peacefully protest this spring and summer. By your actions, you have been true voices for justice for all and you have placed yourselves in harm's way when you have stood in the streets and called out people who choose to engage in violence. You deserve this community's thanks not only for your call for change but your commitment to peace and to justice which you have demonstrated through your words and your deeds.

I will always stand up for the right of citizens to peacefully protest and I know that Dane County law enforcement shares my view. I must, however, denounce the escalation of violence that some people are calling for. I denounce the destruction of property and people who justify it by saying all rage and protests are acceptable. It is not. An attack on the businesses and livelihoods of Dane County residents does not advance calls for racial equality, criminal justice reform, and the clear and unambiguous message that Black lives matter. At the same time, I denounce any extremists who seek to accelerate and live out their perverted fantasies by walking around armed on our streets pretending to "Support the Police" while instead making the work of our servants in law enforcement more dangerous and more deadly by putting untrained armed people in the midst of volatile situations. These armed extremists will only invite violent conflict, leaving our law enforcement officers and our young people who are the heart of these protests in greater danger.

If you support the police, you will leave your guns at home. If you support change, you will leave your guns at home. If you support justice, you will peacefully protest and respect the rights of people to express contrary views.

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