

# Voces de la Frontera: Grassroots coalition urges Gov. Walkers to appoint a “real people’s sheriff”

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin – A coalition of Milwaukee grassroots organizations called the Coalition for a People’s Sheriff released an open letter ([available here](#)) Wednesday to Governor Walker outlining the qualities desired in a new Sheriff. Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke has said he is leaving his job to work in the Trump Administration, and Walker would appoint a new Sheriff. The letter urges Walker to appoint a Sheriff who will not deportations and the separation of immigrant families, provide for humane treatment of community members in the jail, and collaborate with Milwaukee’s diverse communities to truly work for public safety. Video of the press conference announcing the letter can be seen [here](#).

Signatories to the letter included Voces de la Frontera, Uplifting Black Liberation and Black Communities (UBLAC), Ex-Prisoners Organizing (EXPO), American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin, WISDOM, Genderqueer Milwaukee, Working Families Party, Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (WFNHP), Progressive Moms of Milwaukee, Democratic Socialists of America – Milwaukee Chapter, Wisconsin Transgender Health Coalition, Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Organizing for Action, the African-American Roundtable, Shorewood Solidarity Network, and State Rep. David Bowen.

“In 2014, my husband was the victim of a robbery,” said **Rafaela Flores, a member of Voces de la Frontera**. “With Voces’ support we reported this crime,

but we know that there are many immigrant families in our community who suffer such crimes but don't come forward out of fear. We want Walker to appoint who will reject the 287g program that Clarke has embraced. We want Walker to appoint a Sheriff who will not collaborate in deportations and the separation of our families."

"Sheriff Clarke has provided the county with nothing but deaths and public disgrace," said **Alan Schultz, a board member of Ex-Prisoners Organizing (EXPO)**. "We are tired of his unacceptable behavior, his vitriolic speeches that suggest outrageous claims like Black Lives Matter is supposedly going to join ISIS and his calls to make his deputies de facto ICE agents with the federal 287g program. We do not need another sadistic Sheriff mismanaging the County Jail, harassing citizens at the parks, and generally fomenting a hostile environment here in Milwaukee County by placing the blame on the citizens alone and not acknowledging factors that contribute to creating crime such as poverty, mental illness, and limited opportunities to truly succeed."

"We need to have a bold vision of humane, equitable, and constitutional policing in our society," said **Molly Collins, Associate Director of the ACLU of Wisconsin**. "A vision where police departments reconceive their role not as warriors who occupy communities but as guardians who are part of communities they safeguard. A sheriff should protect everyone's civil liberties and safety, and operate as a member of transparent organizations absolutely accountable to the communities they serve."

"The people of Milwaukee deserve a sheriff who understands healthcare is a human right and actively works to protect that right for the people in the jail," said **Candice Owley, RN, President of the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (WFNHP)**. "The lives lost should have been saved, and our collective demands will ensure that human dignity is preserved."

"The Wisconsin Working Families Party stands in active solidarity with all Milwaukee people, activists and communities fighting for a just sheriff," said **Rebecca Lynch, Political Director of the Wisconsin Working Families Party**. "We need a sheriff who honors, in our parks and freeways, the first amendment and protecting our youth and communities. A sheriff who respects the rights, dignity, humanity, mental health and physical health of the men and women in Milwaukee County jails. We need a new sheriff today who will keep all Milwaukee families safe."

In support of the letter, a number of coalition partners released organizational

statements.

**Uplifting Black Liberation and Black Communities (UBLAC):** “Our mission is to educate, liberate, and protect Black communities. Liberation is tied to autonomy, independence, and so much more. We hope that the Milwaukee Police Department, and Sherriff Department, will work with us instead of against us on building relationships between us. Our lives are not toys, or a part of video games. Most interactions between POC and the police look like war zones. We need to have alternatives. We are not here for your amusement. We are here for the future of Black freedom in Milwaukee. That starts with the ones who are supposed to serve and protect us, to recognize our autonomy. This applies to those in public offices, as well. Unapologetically, UBLAC.”

**Progressive Moms of Milwaukee:** “This letter serves as a first step in the pursuit of a just Sheriff for Milwaukee county. Progressive Moms of Milwaukee is proud to unite with all the organizations involved in the pursuit for a Sheriff of the people.”

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*About Voces de la Frontera: Voces de la Frontera is a national leader in the movement for immigrant and worker rights and and the largest grassroots Latinx membership organization in Wisconsin. Led by low-wage immigrant workers and students, Voces has organized some of the largest marches in the country, and works to protect and expand civil rights and workers' rights through leadership development, community organizing and empowerment. Voces de la Frontera has chapters in Milwaukee, Racine, Madison, Green Bay/Fox Cities, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Waukesha, and Walworth County. Voces' student arm is called Youth Empowered in the Struggle. Learn more at [www.vdlf.org](http://www.vdlf.org).*