

# Women's March WI: Responds to Sheriff Schmidt's comments

Posted on Monday, Jul 30, 2018

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At a press conference this afternoon in which Women's March Wisconsin joined Voces de la Frontera and other progressive allies, we expressed our concern with the way in which Acting Sheriff Richard Schmidt stated in recordings that "if someone is struggling and their marriage is just in a disaster...get off God's throne, submit yourself to that person and love that person." This came just after Sheriff Schmidt had said, "And unfortunately maybe it was a bad night, and maybe there... some cross words were spoken, and maybe up to physical violence might have taken place."

Sheriff Schmidt did not suggest contacting law enforcement. He did not discuss seeking refuge at an emergency shelter. He did not suggest removing oneself from an abusive situation. He did not even suggest seeking professional counseling.

In response to our criticism, [Sheriff Schmidt said](#), "I hate to put it this way, but common sense alone would make it, would dictate that people get out of that situation."

Sheriff Schmidt's response is not satisfactory for the next Milwaukee County Sheriff.

We know that leaving a relationship or a home in which domestic violence is occurring is a complex and difficult issue that is most often complicated by emotional manipulation, stalking, and threats of continued violence. In 2016, twenty

people in Milwaukee County, mostly women and children, were murdered in domestic violence homicides. These were not random incidents. In many instances, there were months of 911 calls and reported abuse that preceded these murders.

Sheriff Schmidt claims in response to our statement, “So we didn’t go into all that. It’s a 15-minute podcast. They’re very short. They’re very specific on topic.”

We believe that women and children’s lives and safety are of utmost importance. In any situation in which domestic violence is discussed, we would expect any person in a position of influence and authority, particularly in law enforcement, to discuss solutions that aim to end violence and restore safety prior to restoring a marriage. Anything less than this is a disservice to victims of domestic abuse.