

# Rep. Bowen: Statement on Joseph Mensah charging decision

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MILWAUKEE – State Rep. David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement in reaction to Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm’s decision to not bring charges against Wauwatosa Police Officer Joseph Mensah in the shooting death of 17-year-old Alvin Cole:

“Although I am obviously upset with DA Chisholm’s decision to not press charges in this case, I am not surprised by this miscarriage of justice. As I and the committed activists who have been marching for the past 132 days have been saying all along, the entire system is at fault in these cases. Black and Brown people in this country have been criminalized, they have been targeted, and their cries for respect have been ignored by too many lawmakers and other so-called ‘public servants’ for far too long. It is past time for systemic transformation, and a new approach to policing and criminal justice in our communities – a new approach that will always put human life and dignity first, and that will not continue to easily pass off killings of people of color by police as ‘justified.’”

Earlier today, Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm released his decision to not bring charges against Officer Mensah in the shooting of Alvin Cole in February of this year, determining that Officer Mensah’s actions were “justified.” This is the third time in the past five years that Officer Mensah has killed an individual in the line of duty, only to have those killings later deemed “justified” and not deserving of criminal charges. Nevertheless, earlier this morning, a team of outside investigators (including two former federal prosecutors and five former FBI

agents) released an 83-page report [detailing](#) their recommendation that Officer Mensah be terminated from the Wauwatosa Police Department, citing “inconsistent and misleading” public statements on the part of Mensah, violations of department policies on discussing ongoing shooting investigations, as well as the possibility of Officer Mensah taking a fourth life in the line of duty, thereby “creat[ing] an extraordinary, unwarranted and unnecessary risk to the Wauwatosa Police Department and the City of Wauwatosa.”

“Just because this decision came down this way today does not mean that our fight is over. The fact of the matter is, Joseph Mensah has killed three people in five years, and he has proven that he does not deserve the honor and responsibility of wearing that badge and to truly protect and serve. As has been pointed out on numerous occasions previously, and as this morning’s report confirms, this is a man who has consistently shown a willingness to lie on the record. Based on this track record, how do we know that he won’t kill yet another one of our neighbors in the future? And if the DA isn’t willing to charge him on the basis of his willingness to obstruct justice, how do we know that he has the community’s best interests at heart? We will continue marching, making our voices heard, and demanding better for our communities for as long as it takes. Today, we mourn this decision, and grieve alongside the Cole, Anderson, and Gonzales families. And we keep marching on.”