

Voces de la Frontera Action: Statement on the police shooting of Jacob Blake

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(Milwaukee, Wisconsin) — Last night, 29-year-old Jacob Blake was shot in the back seven times by Kenosha police officers as he was entering the driver's side of an SUV. His three children, aged 3, 5, and 8, were in the car when the shooting happened.

Voces de la Frontera Action stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and with Jacob and his family. Jacob should not be fighting for his life right now. His family and black communities, both in Wisconsin and nationally, deserve justice.

Akousia Anning, the chair of the Voces de la Frontera Racine Demilitarization Action Committee, said:

“The same thing keeps happening, over and over. Yet again, we are being forced to watch this happen. Another black man shot by law enforcement. What we are seeing is that a black man walking away can be used by the police as an excuse to gun a black man down. I am in shock that, in the aftermath of George Floyd, that this can still be happening, in broad daylight, with a crowd gathering.

This is not something we should expect to see after George Floyd. Where you see a black man who does not appear to have anything in his hands, in a situation that could have been deescalated. It shows a blatant disregard for black lives in this society.

I am praying that this man pulls through, and that he finds some semblance of

justice. But I am not even sure if he will find justice. The language we see already is that he was an agitator, that he was not listening to the police. None of that justifies taking a man's life. Not listening does not mean you should be gunned down."

This is not about the need for police reform. This is about the need for systemic and structural change and the dire need to respect black life, in Wisconsin and nationally. Voces de la Frontera Action and the Voces de la Frontera Racine Demilitarization Action Committee will continue fighting for Black lives and for Black humanity. We emphasize the need to redirect funding to our communities and redirect police funds to social workers, our communities, and our neighborhoods. This divesting of funds is crucial to dismantling racism and systemic oppression.

Christine Neumann-Ortiz, the Executive Director of Voces de la Frontera Action, said:

"The immediate outrage and protest to Jacob Blake's shooting shows the strength of the national grassroots Black Lives Matter movement, which is fundamentally about challenging institutionalized racism and demanding police accountability. This momentum also has to be brought to our electoral organizing, because Trump is running on an explicit law and order platform, which is a dog whistle to his racist and white nationalist base. This ideology has been used for decades by both Republicans and Democrats to criminalize people of color and militarize the police.

However, the Trump administration represents a historically unique threat. Our country is in a watershed moment of reckoning with systemic racism and police brutality, and Trump is doubling down on his far-right rhetoric and leaning on his racist base during this moment. We need to move this energy into our electoral organizing to drive out this authoritarian, white nationalist, far-right government that he seeks to create. Trump represents an escalated attack on decades of labor rights and civil rights movements. Everything we have experienced in the last four years will be unimaginably worse in the next four, if he is re-elected."

In response to the police shooting of Jacob Blake, Voces de la Frontera Action and the Voces de la Frontera Racine Demilitarization Action Committee make a double call for action: a call for action at the local level, and a call for electoral action at the state level.

At the local level, we invite allies to become actively involved in demilitarizing your neighborhoods, your schools, and your communities through local organizing

initiatives. In Racine, the Youth Protection Resolution demands that Racine police presence be removed from Racine Public Schools and for decriminalization of youth traffic tickets. On the electoral level, we encourage all eligible citizens to vote for racial justice and police accountability in November. We furthermore encourage Wisconsin voters to become involved with the Voces de la Frontera Action Voceros por el Voto program, to build a network of 23,000 Latinx and multiracial youth voters. Together we can vote out the institutionalized racism that is criminalizing people of color and immigrants, creating a mass incarceration crisis, and allowing for the impunity of deadly violence against Black men, such as Jacob Blake from Kenosha.

For more information, reach out to Communications Director Jacquelyn Kovarik at jacquelyn@vdlf.org or at 414-436-9822.

This is a correction on the details of the Voces de la Frontera Racine Demilitarization Action Committee Youth Protection Resolution.

In our previous statement, I said that part of the Youth Protection Resolution is getting Racine police out of Racine Public Schools. Although that is part of our long term goal, that is not a part of the Youth Protection Resolution. The Youth Protection Resolution focuses specifically on decriminalizing youth tickets. It specifically demands that the Common Council directs the police department to stop the charging of fines on citations issued to youth under the age of 18.

We will be launching the Racine Youth Protection Resolution in full later this week, so stay tuned for that.