

Voces de la Frontera: Celebrates the rejection of federal COPS grant but finds the 9-6 vote troubling

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Voces de la Frontera urged all Milwaukee Common Council members to vote no, concerned with increased policing on communities of color and immigration enforcement

(Milwaukee, Wisconsin) — Voces de la Frontera, Wisconsin's largest grassroots Latinx organization applauds the decision made by the Milwaukee Common Council's Public Safety Committee on Tuesday morning to reject a nearly \$10 million grant that would have increased policing on communities of color and immigration enforcement. That being said, Voces de la Frontera is disappointed by the 9-6 rejection, after attempts to persuade the Milwaukee Common Council for a full rejection on the basis of concerns with possible collaboration with Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE), a lack of immediate accountability, and the impact it would have on Black and Brown Milwaukee residents.

Calling out the federal grant's faulty priorities in a letter addressed to the Milwaukee Common Council, the Voces de la Frontera Demilitarization Committee said, " While we are dealing with this unprecedented health crisis, this grant focuses on strengthening the police force instead of focusing on funding to mitigate health disparities, prevent evictions, and protect workers.

Voces de la Frontera for years- and more so this year- has been building coalitions with people of color and the Black Lives Matter Movement for police accountability and reinvesting funds from policing to community programs. Milwaukee is a national example of why more policing is a failure if we don't redirect those funds. This grant moves us in the opposite direction."

Voces de la Frontera recognizes that the federal COPS grant initiative came from President Trump, a president who has been hostile and detrimental to communities of color. Although President-Elect Biden is the incoming administration, Congress still has to vote on his new appointments, which could face significant opposition and thus stall the process. This means that it may take much longer than expected to begin the process of restructuring these federal agencies. Voces de la Frontera has championed the rights of working-class and immigrant families in Wisconsin for over twenty years and we will continue to hold local and federal leaders accountable during the Trump-Biden administration transition and beyond.