

Citizen Action of Wisconsin: Rittenhouse verdict a travesty

Posted on Friday, Nov 19, 2021

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Milwaukee: On behalf of our grassroots member activists and staff across the state, Citizen Action of Wisconsin stands in solidarity with the families of victims Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber, and survivors Gaige Grosskreutz, Jacob Blake, and the residents of Kenosha seeking justice and peace.

In Wisconsin, we care and show up for each other, no matter who we are or what we look like. We share food, cry, pray, and hold each other up when tragedy strikes. We talk through what we have in common and join together across our differences to come up with solutions to make the world a better place for all of us in Wisconsin and America. In response to Kyle Rittenhouse being found not guilty on all charges today, Citizen Action of Wisconsin's Movement Politics Director JoAnna Bautch had the following to say:

“Kyle Rittenhouse crossed state lines to come to Wisconsin with the intent to infiltrate a peaceful protest organized by leaders and residents in Kenosha calling for racial justice. He did not come to help the community. He waved a gun in the face of people exercising their first amendment rights. He is a white supremacist who came with support from white nationalist groups to incite violence and intimidate Wisconsinites -Black, white, and Brown- to keep us from speaking out. In his attempts to stop people from exercising their rights, he shot and killed two innocent men, and harmed another.”

“Black and Brown people across this country should not be targeted and subjected to excessive brutality and violence and murdered by the very police who our tax dollars fund to protect us and keep our communities safe. We come together in our communities to spotlight the long-standing economic, racial, and structural oppression perpetuated by certain politicians and public institutions. They defund our schools, cut public transportation, and block our own tax dollars from coming into our communities to create good family-supporting jobs and access to quality healthcare. They profit from incarcerating our fathers, brothers, and sons. They then try to divide us across race and class by blaming poor people and People of Color for all of us being denied the things we know will make our communities safe and healthy.

“When we come together, as we did in Kenosha and across the state and country last year, we are calling for good family-supporting jobs, access to quality healthcare, fully funded schools, safe streets for our kids to play in, and a healthy future full of opportunity for all of us in Wisconsin. Rittenhouse came to Kenosha last year because he believes that those things are only for certain people. The Judge and Jury of this trial have given permission to anyone who is filled with hate to show up with a gun and murder people just because they are willing to stand up and call for justice and a better way of life.”

“The fact is that Rittenhouse is free after murdering two innocent men and harming a third because of racist ideology. It is heartbreaking that he gets to live out the rest of his life with his family and friends, while Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber’s friends and families have to figure out how to go on without them. The idea that our criminal justice system is so broken as to allow for this to happen is just plain scary. But in the spirit of the civil rights movement, we won’t stop gathering peacefully in our communities, calling for what is right and just, for all of us in Wisconsin.”