



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 10, 2020

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### **Rep. Bowen Statement on Weekend Spitting Incident in Shorewood**

MILWAUKEE - In response to the incident this weekend when a Shorewood woman purposefully blocked protest traffic before spitting on a teenaged Black protester, State Rep. David Bowen (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

“The actions this past weekend by Shorewood lawyer Stephanie Rapkin were truly abhorrent. To not only block a peaceful protest with your car, but to respond to the protesters’ criticism by assaulting a Black youth unprovoked? This incident reminds us that all too often, Black children are not given the space to simply be the young people they are. Instead, years of White supremacy and systemic racism have branded them as threats - not by any of their own actions, but simply because of the color of their skin. The young man who was assaulted by Stephanie Rapkin was doing everything right - he had helped organize and lead a peaceful march, he was exercising his First Amendment rights, and he was speaking truth to power. And this educated, middle-aged woman decided that because of that, he was a ‘threat’ and he deserved to be spat on during a pandemic, making it even more traumatic to his health.”

This Saturday, Shorewood resident and lawyer Stephanie Rapkin parked her vehicle in the middle of North Oakland Ave. in Shorewood, blocking both lanes of traffic and obstructing the progress of a peaceful march. When she was confronted by the protesters and asked to move her car, she lashed out, culminating in her spitting on a 17-year old protester and fellow Shorewood resident. Protesters and activists, including Shorewood resident Shavonda Sisson & Lilo Allen and other amazing black women, helped quickly identify Ms. Rapkin, and police arrested her that evening before releasing her from custody, per COVID-19 protocol. The next day, Ms. Rapkin again confronted protesters organized by Dr. Monique Liston & Activist Vaun Mayes, who had assembled in front of her home, assaulting another person and later physically assaulting a police officer who had come to arrest her for a second time.

“People may want to look at this as an isolated incident, as something that ‘doesn’t happen in Shorewood’ or other North Shore communities. But as Black folks know all too well, these kinds of racist attitudes, actions, and prejudicial fears exist even in supposedly ‘progressive’ communities. Instead of looking at this case as an anomaly, I challenge residents of Shorewood to reflect on this incident, look inside of themselves, and educate themselves and their fellow communities on what it takes to be actively *anti*-racist in their personal and everyday lives.

I want to thank all of the incredible activists and community members who quickly brought this incident the attention it deserved, and ensured that this woman would face justice for her hateful actions. I fully stand behind the family, calls for Stephanie Rapkin to be disbarred, and for this incident to be recognized as the hate crime it was. Racism is a daily occurrence in communities across Wisconsin and the United States, and it deserves to be called out and shamed anywhere and everywhere it shows itself. While this incident was not the first time that Black individuals have been made to feel unwelcome in Shorewood, I hope and pray that it is one of the last.”

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