



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 17, 2020

Contact: Rep. Jonathan Brostoff, (608) 266-0650

Rep. Brostoff Statement on Police Union Smears Against City Attorney Tearman Spencer

MILWAUKEE – In response to reports that two Milwaukee police unions have accused City Attorney Tearman Spencer of “derelection of . . . duty” regarding his handling of the ongoing Sterling Brown settlement, State Representative Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement:

“Last time I checked, when someone puts in the time and effort to clean up a mess that *you* made, you’re supposed to thank them, not berate them. For the Milwaukee Police Association and Milwaukee Police Supervisors Organization to throw this tantrum over City Attorney Spencer working in a professional manner to settle a cut-and-dry police brutality case is very telling, and it speaks to how certain individuals in law enforcement think that they can do no wrong. In fact, MPA President Dale Bormann, Jr. basically admitted as much in an interview with the right-wing outlet Wisconsin Right Now, when he told them that ‘[t]he role of the city attorney in the City of Milwaukee is to protect officers when something occurs that they did correctly.’ Well, as a reminder, those officers did *not* act ‘correctly’ - the Milwaukee Police Department and even individual officers involved in the Sterling Brown incident admitted that they had acted improperly at the time - and the role of the City Attorney is *actually* to represent the city and its taxpayers, not police officers with brutality on their minds. What world do these police union officials live in?”

Yesterday, the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel [reported](#) that the Milwaukee Police Association and Milwaukee Police Supervisors Organization sent a letter criticizing City Attorney Spencer’s handling of the Sterling Brown settlement agreement, going so far as to say in their letter that they have no confidence in City Attorney Spencer to handle the case in the best interest of their union members (although, the responsibility of the City Attorney is to the City, not to individual police officers caught on video brutalizing people). The settlement stems from a 2018 incident in which Milwaukee Bucks player Sterling Brown was tased, taken to the ground, stepped on, and arrested by a group of eight Milwaukee police officers over a parking violation at a Walgreens store. Three of the officers were formally disciplined by the Milwaukee Police Department over their actions, and several of the officers involved admitted, after Department-mandated retraining, that they had violated Brown’s constitutional rights in the interaction.

“If it weren’t already blatantly obvious, there’s a fox in the henhouse when it comes to promoting good policing, and it is these so-called police union ‘leaders.’ For these individuals to criticize Milwaukee’s first Black City Attorney for actually taking action on recognizing and working to combat the scourge of police brutality in our community is, at best, problematic optically. At worst, it just provides yet another example of the systemic issues surrounding (lack of) police accountability and the record of implicit bias in policing that activists have been working to change for years.

Our city, our state, and our country are at a crossroads in the fight for racial equality and a better future for all. We can either continue to listen to unelected extremists who insist that they couldn’t possibly ever do anything wrong, or we can take a long hard look at what hasn’t been working for a long time and work to change it. I, for one, refuse to stand by and allow a diseased status quo to continue unchecked. I am on the side of City Attorney Spencer, and I am on the side of the fight for justice.”

###

OFFICE: State Capitol, P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53708 ★ PHONE: (608) 266-0650

TOLL-FREE: (888) 534-0019 ★ E-MAIL: Rep.Brostoff@legis.wisconsin.gov ★ WEB: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/19/brostoff>