

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Representative Hong's statement on lack of charges in Jacob Blake shooting:**

When all else fails us, we turn to the letter of the law to find us justice. It is a dark day in America when the very same system that is created to preserve our humanity, takes it away -- and so many dark days there have been. Black Americans continue to be targeted and murdered by police, and as the decision to not charge the officer who shot Jacob Blake shows, our criminal justice system aids and abates their white supremacy. Kenosha police officer Rusten Sheskey shot Jacob Blake 7 times in the back in the presence of his children; to find him in good standing with the law is to find the law unconscionable.

It was my hope that the rawness of this past year, the collective struggle we have been on with COVID, would allow us to see each other as humans. But that has been shaken to the core today. Where there should be hope that the movement for racial justice this summer brought structural change, I find only numbness. I am so disappointed in and ashamed of DA Gravely and other law enforcement experts who came to this decision and feel so deeply for Jacob Blake and his community.

We are at a precipice in American history; we can either choose to preserve Black lives or choose to stand by as they are taken. Incrementalism is cowardice — the inability of our elected officials to rise in courage and enact meaningful reform is why we are here. Most importantly, we need to recognize that the lack of decisive action and resolution is not inherent to one political party; Democrats and Republicans alike have come up short time and time again.

To stand for Black lives is to do so without hesitation. Without that unrelenting belief, we will never move forward. Let Black lives live.

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