

Dear Mayor Durkan,

The National Women's Political Caucus of Washington is writing to express our loss of faith in your leadership as the Mayor of Seattle. As an organization that endorsed you and your 2017 campaign for Mayor of Seattle, we are writing this open letter to you to ask for your swift action and change of course.

We find that your leadership and actions are incongruous with our mission and values. In response, we request that you take the following actions:

- Cease use of all violent tactics against protesters, including but not limited to rubber bullets, flash bang grenades, chemical agents, and any and all body holds that restrict breathing or endanger civilian lives.
- Support the demands of Decriminalize Seattle, including defunding SPD by at least 50% immediately, reinvesting those funds in Black community-led housing and health programs, and releasing all protestors without charges.
- Use the power of your office over city development and city-owned land as well as your office's connections to Sound Transit and the King County Council to advance Black-led land ownership, development, and anti-displacement projects.
- Provide public resources to Black-led community-based organizations to facilitate community-based organizing, healing, and self-determination.

The struggle for Black liberation and full humanity in America finds its genesis at the moment white colonizers brought enslaved people through the treacherous Atlantic slave trade over 400 years ago. Through slavery, the Civil War, reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights Movement, and most recently the Black Lives Matter movement, Black communities and Black families have fought for and demanded their freedom, often alongside and in solidarity with Indigenous, immigrant, refugee, LGBTQ+ communities.

Recent national protests in response to the murders by police of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and thousands of others have grown out of this long history of struggle and movement-building. The historic protest movement underway is simply a continuation of the long and hard-fought movement that Black people have been leading for centuries despite the continued brutalization of their community by local, state, and federal governments.

Our mission at NWPC-WA is to identify, mentor, educate and support women leaders who demonstrate a commitment to reproductive freedom and *women's economic and social equality and equity*. As our nation reckons with the violent realities of 400 years of white supremacy and anti-Black racism, it has been up to local leaders like yourself to define their own response. ***As a white woman in elected office, it is your responsibility***

***to shoulder the work of undoing white supremacy and institutionalized racism in Seattle and beyond.***

In this work, we find that you have failed. Under your leadership, not only have you refused to meet the demands of Black activists and communities, you have failed to control the Seattle Police Department and perpetuated systems of violence as a show of strength and control. Under your leadership, the Seattle Police Department has brutally attacked peaceful protesters, children, and [members of the media](#) with tear gas, flash bangs, rubber bullets, and pepper spray. This callous use of force resulted in one woman [going into cardiac arrest](#) after being hit in the chest by a flash-bang, another woman potentially [losing sight in one of her eyes after being hit by a rubber bullet](#), [a child being maced](#) in the face, and [a three-month-old foaming at the mouth](#) in his own crib due to the tear gas building up in his family's apartment. Over 10,000 complaints have been filed against the Seattle Police officers as a result of these sanctioned acts of state violence.

Despite these complaints and the granting of a Temporary Restraining Order by Judge Richard Jones [to halt use of chemical agents against protesters](#), the Seattle Police Department appears determined to continue escalating encounters with protesters. Seattle police have been documented on video seizing and [destroying the belongings of people residing at](#) the Capitol Hill Occupied Protest (CHOP) and even putting [their knee on the neck of at least one protester](#) as they swept the CHOP.

These acts of violence are part of a long-standing pattern at the Seattle Police Department, a pattern that resulted in federal oversight of the department. Oversight that you proudly, and repeatedly, took credit for initiating. It is unfortunate that the voters you courted promising a better day, a moment of justice, and a second to breathe; have found themselves breathless waiting for the next time you cloud their living rooms or condone violence against their children. Despite the regular intercession of Judge James Robart, and the establishment of a tripartite system based in national best practices, no officers in the Seattle Police Department have been held accountable for the murders of Charleena Lyles, Shaun Fuhr, or Che Taylor. Quite the opposite; the Seattle Police Department has repeatedly declined to follow recommendations from the Office of Police Accountability in issues of discipline. You have also been accused of interfering with the [independence of this system](#), further undermining community confidence.

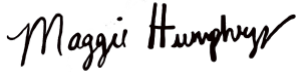
You have had ample opportunity to reverse course and take meaningful action. On [Wednesday, June 3, Black leaders delivered their demands directly to you at City Hall](#), along with thousands of others in the streets. Instead of directly addressing these demands, you likened your family's Irish ancestry to the suffering of Black people in this nation; which creates a false equivalency between forced migration and the immigrant experience. You have since refused to meet these demands and [continued to hold closed-door meetings](#) with a limited group of Black leaders rather than meaningfully giving power to the Black community to lead a process of self-determined action.

It is our sincere hope that you reflect on the administrative actions that continue to perpetuate harm, take accountability for their effects on a community you took an oath to serve, and take swift action to meet the demands of the Black community.

Signed,

The National Women's Political Caucus of Washington

Maggie Humphreys, Board Member



Emily Wicks, President



Alexis Oliver, Diversity Co-Chair



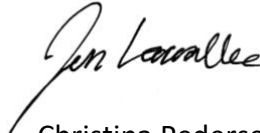
Leah Griffin, Legislative Chair



Olgy Diaz, Diversity Co-Chair



Jen Lavallee, Secretary



Samantha Casne, Immediate Past President and Membership Chair



Christina Pedersen, Education & Training Chair



Sarah Bosley, Vice President



Breann Pugnetti, Events Co-Chair



Catherine Minch, Co-Chair, State Endorsement Committee and Co-Chair, King County Local Endorsement Action Committee



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Kiana Scott  
Board Member, At Large



Bonnie Gail, Events Co-Chair



Gail Bergeron, State Endorsements Co-Chair

