

## Seattle Protest Report

By Jonah Lehto

(Seattle, July 9) As of Thursday evening, a majority of Seattle city council members now support defunding SPD by 50% in principle, with voting yet to come. Council members Lisa Herbold, Dan Strauss, and Andrew Lewis recently declared support for the decriminalization plans established by King County Equity Now and Decriminalize Seattle that include but are not limited to the 50% budget cut on the \$409 million SPD budget. Council member Lorena Gonzalez apologized for supporting police budget increases in her past votes. Other council colleagues have previously announced their support of the protesters core demand of a 50% cut promised quick action. As one council member was quoted in the Seattle Times said she now considers the police "unreformable."

However, there has been disapproval coming from Mayor Jenny Durkan and Senior Deputy Mayor Mike Fong who warn of implementation issues. Fears and concerns are being raised about the cuts impact on policing. At the same time, supporters of the budget cuts stress that police will also be relieved of numerous responsibilities or liabilities so it is more like a budget shift than a true budget.cut of 50%.

The three demands of the CHOP were to defund SPD by 50%, provide support for community relief with the former half of the newly available police budget, and to free all protesters. As of July 10th with council announcements on budget cuts, all three demands are finally now being responded to.

According to KUOW, the jail website can give a "wrong impression" on the number of protesters that are still jailed. When asked about the more than 70 who were arrested, Prosecutor Mark Satterberg says all nonviolent protesters are now released and only 20 remain in custody including the two drivers who drove into crowds of protesters. The fate of the remaining protesters remains up in the air.

On July 9th, lawyers representing a group of protesters claimed that Seattle police violated a federal court order on crowd control by using chemical weapons against peaceful protesters. In a letter sent to the City Attorney prior to filing a motion the lawyers laid out some of their claims. Though there is an exception for violent protesters in the order, the protesters were sleeping at the time so the only issues seem to revolve around the alleged possession of weapons, if any.