

Seattle Protest Report

By Jonah Lehto

(Seattle, 7.16.20) Daily protests continue in Seattle.

In what is now being called the CHOP 2.0, homeless and protesters are camped on Seattle Central College's lawn right outside a former CHOP barrier. The area is a designated protest zone under the college's rules, but not designated for camping. Thus, the Seattle Central Community College claims that the encampment is not allowed on their premises and they did not authorize it and the tents must move.

School president Edward Lange made his position clear in a letter to staff and students that claims the "voluntary dismantling" of the area should happen in a "few days" or else they "will be forced to call upon the city and the SPD to remove the encampment to protect the health and safety of our community." As a comment, it appears that a CHOP 2.0 sweep is in the works as the city continues a pattern of driving its homeless and protester populations from place to place.

In another story, Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan has asked a King County Judge Mary Roberts to reconsider her decision to approve a recall decision regarding tear gas. Durkan claims that as a mayor, she has no obligation to manage the police. Durkan's attorney, Rebecca Roe, wrote that "Mayor Durkan has no legal or constitutional duty to prescribe policies and procedures for SPD." Later, Roe wrote, "If individual officer's actions violated those policies, Petitioners fail to set forth any evidence that Mayor Durkan or Chief Best intended this result."

Mayor Durkan further clarified her position on KUOW public radio on Thursday. Regarding the mayor's control of the police department, Mayor Durkan says she confers regularly with the police chief and gives directives from time to time but claimed she has no duty to direct the police and thus only the police chief is responsible. She

called the police chiefs decision to use tear gas a "reasonable" decision.

On defunding the police, the Mayor also said she supports defunding by what she called "disinvestment and reinvestment" such as by taking away parking enforcement from the police and giving it to the department of transportation. The mayor says she agrees that armed police officers are not the answer to every problem, but she differs on how much can be cut from the police, with her figures suggesting a 20% cut. Community groups are requesting an initial outlay of \$3 million dollars in order to prepare to handle the coming caseload from tasks assigned away from police.