

September, 2020

Dear U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams,

Pacific Northwest Family Circle and the undersigned organizations and community leaders condemn the power grab by the US Attorney's Office to [prosecute Edward Schinzing for suspected arson to a county, not federal, building](#). **We demand that you drop the felony charges against Edward Schinzing for arson, restoring the power that the Multnomah County's District Attorney should rightfully have in prosecuting county-level crimes.** We support the [Aug 11, 2020 announcement](#) and discretionary action by newly elected Multnomah County District Attorney (DA) Mike Schmidt to decline to prosecute people protesting peacefully for Black Lives and against police violence.

Right before DA Mike Schmidt took office on Aug 1, 2020, outgoing DA Rod Underhill, and prosecutors working for him, helped the federal government bring federal charges against a suspected arsonist, Edward Schinzing, for setting a fire in a *county* building. We do not support or condemn Mr. Schinzing, since under U.S. law, this person's guilt or innocence is unknown until the end of a trial.

Historically, the county DA has had the power to press charges for county level offenses, such as arson of a county building. Multnomah County DA Mike Schmidt's recent proclamation made it clear that while he wouldn't prosecute peaceful protesting, he would have pressed charges in this case. There is no valid reason for the federal government to press charges or for county prosecutors to allow the federal government to do so.

Nonetheless, Multnomah County's prosecutors were more than willing to give up their own power to uphold a racist, ableist policing system in Multnomah County, despite 75% of voters in Multnomah County voting for Mike Schmidt. We believe prosecutors are trying to assist the federal government with their priorities and protect officers from prosecution over the [reformist platform voters elected Mike Schmidt for](#).

Local control of the criminal justice system could be completely lost if this is allowed to continue. No matter how one voted, 100% of voters in Multnomah County, and 100% of District Attorneys across the nation, should be deeply concerned.

Protest is a protected right under the constitution and a key element of PNWFC Family Members' justice struggles. Recent protesting in Portland is what eliminated special enforcement teams like the Gang Violence Enforcement Team and "School Resource Officers (SROs)" (i.e. police in schools).

There are so many reasons to protest police violence.

Over 380 Loved Ones in Oregon have been killed by police and not one officer has been disciplined or stayed disciplined. In addition, they also aren't disciplined when they violate their own policies as they cause these deaths.

For those whose Loved Ones were killed and won't stay quiet like PNWFC Family Members and so many others, police monitor and intimidate the Family. Police drive by their houses or park outside them in marked cars (causing intimidation to the Families and casting doubt in neighbors' minds). Police follow them through town as they drive home, or for many, many miles outside of town.

One Family Member was literally stalked by the officers who killed her son, 21 year-old Loved One Brad Lee Morgan. They regularly came to the McDonald's where she worked for 7 years, addressing her by her first name and taunting her, forcing her to serve them. When another PNWFC Family Member went to address this with who is now the current Police Chief Charles Lovell, they

investigated. They issued paperwork that told those officers and the Family Member that these officers couldn't go to that McDonald's anymore. But the officers never stopped going there. And, they were never punished. This PNWFC Family Member was forced to quit her job, injecting another layer of chaos into her mourning process.

We know that protesters of police violence experience similar levels of intimidation caused by police whether they be at home or in public. The recent federal presence of police officers has gone back to previous levels of permanently placed police. Sadly though, great harm is still being done to peaceful protestors, *every night*, by police officers who could now be prosecuted by Mike Schmidt for misconduct.

Pacific Northwest Family Circle supports the numerous statements in writing and speech made by District Attorney Mike Schmidt that he will prosecute police for misconduct and for killing Loved Ones. We enthusiastically look forward to the day when Mike Schmidt will prosecute police and hold prosecutors accountable in Multnomah County. But, *the very fabric of local elections is being destroyed* by a federal power grab and undermined by Mike Schmidt's own prosecutors, working under the previous DA Rod Underhill, in Multnomah County.

We the undersigned, state again our support of DA Mike Schmidt's August 11, 2020 statement on declining to prosecute protesters and our condemnation of the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Multnomah County prosecutors that cooperated to give them power that has historically has been localized at the county level.

We call for the U.S. Attorney's Office to restore local control of prosecution to District Attorney Mike Schmidt immediately. Drop felony charges against Edward Schinzing and allow DA Mike Schmidt to decide how to proceed on this case.

Respectfully,

[Pacific Northwest Family Circle](#)

[CAIR-Oregon \(Oregon chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations\)](#)

[Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice](#)

[AFSCME Local 328 at Oregon Health and Science University](#)

[Mental Health Association of Portland](#)

[First Unitarian Church of Portland](#)

[Portland United Against Hate](#)

[Portland's Resistance](#)

[Oregon DA for the People](#)

[Portland Buddhist Peace Fellowship](#)

[Portland Caucus of Rank-and-File Educators](#)

[ACLU of Oregon](#)

[BerniePDX](#)

[Portland-Metro People's Coalition](#)

[A New PATH \(Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing\)](#)

[Democratic Party of Oregon's Historical and Ongoing Anti-Blackness Study Group](#)

[All Rise Magazine](#)

[Portland Tenants United](#)

[SOCIAL JUSTICE COALITION, a Ministry of the Central Lutheran Church, Portland OR](#)

[Alliance for Democracy, Portland](#)

[<-350PDX](#)

[PHOENIX Rising Transitions](#)

[Jewish Voice for Peace](#)

[Extinction Rebellion Portland](#)

[Portland Raging Grannies](#)

Justice Advocates

Clackamas County Showing Up for Racial Justice

Aric Clark, Sherwood United Methodist Church