



For Immediate Release

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MILWAUKEE – Cendi Tena, Deputy Executive Director of Organizing at Leaders Igniting Transformation, issues the following statement in response to Common Council President Cavalier Johnson [call for](#) MPD to be reinstated in Milwaukee schools and for American Rescue Plan funding to be [used to hire more cops](#):

“The comments made by Johnson about the incident at James Madison High School on October 5 were unfounded and hurtful. There is no evidence to support the claim that police presence in schools creates safer campuses. In fact, the evidence suggests the opposite. Studies have shown that schools are no safer, even after years of punitive policing and disciplinary measures, than before such policies were implemented.”

“Before the Milwaukee School Board ended its contracts with MPS, discriminatory policing on campus resulted in Black students, who make up only 53% of the MPS student body, receiving 80% of suspensions across the school district. Similarly, students with disabilities, who accounted for only 20% of total enrollment, were involved in 91% of in-school restraints and seclusions.”*

“Let me be clear: we will not go backwards. Thanks to the steadfast advocacy and grassroots organizing of LIT’s members and other community members, the school board made a promise to put the safety of its students first by demilitarizing school campuses. We will make sure they keep that promise.”

“Black and Brown students and students with disabilities deserve to feel safe not only on campus but also in their communities. As in schools, research shows that more police funding, presence and interaction rarely reduces violence and crimes in communities. In fact, data show that police often *increase* the risk of violence during intervention. This is why we strongly oppose Johnson’s call for American Rescue Plan dollars to be used to hire more police officers and vehemently reject the notion that adding police officers in our community will increase public safety. More cops isn’t a “balanced approach” to public safety. More cops tip the scales in favor of mass incarceration and away from justice. Instead of funding for more police, American Rescue Plan dollars should fund education and community-based violence prevention efforts that are proven to work.”

Leaders Igniting Transformation (LIT) is a Black and Brown-led independent nonprofit that organizes young people to build independent political power for social, racial, and economic justice.

**For the full report visit [here](#).*