

# Drop the Charges on the Puerto Rican People's Parade 7! Hands Off the Revolution Club!



We represent many different political views and perspectives. Some of us agree with the message of the Revolution Club, others do not share their views. But all of us agree with the following demand and call on you to join us in signing this statement:

**We the undersigned call on State's Attorney Kim Foxx to IMMEDIATELY drop the charges on 7 members of the Revolution Club, Chicago who were illegally arrested while exercising their first amendment rights at the 2018 Puerto Rican People's Parade.**

List Signatories Here: \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliations (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Background on the case provided by the Revolution Club:**

Members of the Revolution Club set up on a street corner as crowds gathered for the 2018 Puerto Rican People's Parade. They had been passing out literature and talking to people for 2 hours when more than a dozen police surrounded them, dragged some to the ground and arrested 7 of them. One member, Noche Diaz, is facing charges of disorderly conduct, resisting/obstructing and violation of the sound ordinance. The other 6 are all charged with resisting/obstructing. These misdemeanor charges carry up to a year in jail.

As their lawyers have argued in court, had they been lauding the police and the American flag the police would have encouraged this and left them alone. But instead, they were displaying panels showing crimes of the system—wars for empire, destruction of the planet, attacks on immigrants, patriarchal attacks on women, mass incarceration and police brutality directed at Black and Brown people, and a special display about Puerto Rico and the criminal non-response by the Trump/Pence regime to Hurricane Maria. Through all this their message rang out: This system cannot be reformed, it must be overthrown. Literature about how a revolution was possible was handed out and people were being signed up to get with the revolution.

Their lawyers have argued that they were arrested because the CPD, led by a Deputy Chief, did not like the content of their political message and then made up criminal charges to justify their arrest. They have been dragged through court for over a year and their trial is soon approaching.

This arrest is part of a larger pattern of arrests and harassment of the Revolution Club by the CPD. Between July 2016 and September 2019, members of the Revolution Club were arrested or ticketed on 14 different occasions and nearly arrested, interfered with or harassed an additional 20 times. These near arrests were times when the police came close to arresting members of the Revolution Club but backed off after being strongly challenged by a lawyer or witnesses on the scene.

The actions of the police have a chilling effect not only on members of the Revolution Club but more fundamentally on the people who are drawn to this message. Particularly at this time when civil liberties and the rule of law are being torn asunder by the Trump/Pence regime, we call on people to support the Revolution Club by signing the call to drop the charges.

**In a statement written on June 12, 2019 Rebecca Glenberg, senior staff attorney of the ACLU of Illinois concluded:**

**“The Revolution Club and its members have the first amendment right to attend permitted events in public forum, they have the right to communicate their message and the police may not make them leave the area or limit their speech based on their message.”**