

January 12, 2021

Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council

Dear Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council,

The undersigned organizations and individuals are writing to urge the Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council (SRLJC) and the Spokane County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) to support the SRLJC Strategic Planning Committee's recommendation that the SRLJC Bylaws be amended to have the Racial Equity Committee Chair fill the 4th open SRLJC Community Representative seat on an ongoing basis.

SRLJC Strategic Planning Committee has broad representation of both system and community members. It drafted the current SRLJC Bylaws as well as the Draft Procedure Manual. The Committee's current recommendation is based on an open discussion at its last meeting, December 14, 2020.

We urge the SRLJC to adopt this important recommendation from its Strategic Planning Committee to have the SRLJC Racial Equity Committee Chair serve on the SRLJC for the following reasons:

- The SRLJC Racial Equity Committee represents both community and justice system officials and is tasked with ensuring all systems related to justice region wide have an applied equity lens.
- The justice system experiences pervasive systemic disparities and inequities, and the Racial Equity Committee Chair plays a key role in connecting the work of the Racial Equity Committee to all areas of the justice system within the scope of the SRLJC.
- The Chair of the Racial Equity Committee, who is a community member and a person with lived experience, is selected by Committee members and serves as the voice of the community as well as the Committee.
- The value of lived experience supersedes any and all educational experience and is evidence of the success of reform when applied in an equitable manner.
- Not only is it going to greatly benefit the SRLJC to have the Racial Equity Committee Chair serving on the SRLJC, it is also increasingly efficient to have one of the four SRLJC Community Representative positions filled automatically by the Chair.

With the increase of COVID-19 in the Spokane County Jail, the increase in jail numbers, and continued racial disparities that exist in the jail and within the justice system, the SRLJC has critical and urgent work to do. With the Chair of the Racial Equity Committee serving on the SRLJC to provide expertise and a strong community voice, the Council will be in a much better position to address the challenges ahead.

Sincerely,

Spokane Tribe  
Disability Rights Washington  
Fuse Washington  
Futurewise  
Greater Spokane Progress  
I Did The Time/ Revive Center For Returning Citizens

League of Women Voters of Spokane Area  
Muslims for Community, Action & Support (MCAS)  
Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane  
Planned Parenthood of Greater Washington and North Idaho  
River Warrior Society  
Smart Justice Spokane  
Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR)  
Spokane Veterans For Peace  
Tenants Union of Washington State  
The Lands Council  
YWCA of Spokane  
Jac Archer, Spokane Community Against Racism (SCAR)  
Terri Anderson, Tenants Union of Washington State  
Curtis Hampton, SCAR, Smart Justice Spokane Executive Committee, SRLJC Racial Equity Committee  
Lannie MacAndrea, Inland NW Unitarian Universal Community  
Debbie Cato  
Marilyn Darilek  
Cecily Ferguson  
Bob Murphy  
Ping Ping  
Naghmana Sherazi  
Ben Stuckart  
Kate Telis