



ACLU of Wisconsin Responds to Partial Release of Report on UW Milwaukee Police Actions During March 4th Incident

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MILWAUKEE, WI – Today, Christopher Ahmuty, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin issued the following statement in response to the partial release of a report on the conduct of the UWM Police Department during at March 4th demonstration.

“The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin is concerned that the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee may be missing an opportunity to improve the UWM Police Department’s response to free speech activities, including demonstrations, on campus. After a March 4th demonstration on campus at which 15 of 150 demonstrators were ticketed, the ACLU of Wisconsin urged the university to undertake an independent investigation. The two-page executive summary of an independent review panel’s report has indicated several deficiencies in terms of planning, training, equipment and tactics. Vice Chancellor Christy L. Brown’s memorandum responding to the report focuses on the prevention of “civil unrest” and absolves, and even praises, the police for their conduct, while endorsing the recommendations in the review panel.

“The ACLU of Wisconsin believes that Vice Chancellor Brown’s response to the review panel’s report is inconsistent with the report’s executive summary. Even more troubling, both documents fail to suggest ways to facilitate peaceful protest. The apparent mindset of the panel and Vice Chancellor is all about control and the exercise of police authority. The ACLU had hoped that this report would recognize that the vast majority of demonstrators were peacefully exercising their rights to free speech. Because of the deficiencies indicated in the report and poor decisions by UWMPD officers and their superiors during the demonstration the UWMPD did not handle the situation as well as it might have.

“The ACLU of Wisconsin recognizes that officers have a great deal of responsibility and work in often difficult circumstances. Difficult circumstances do not diminish their responsibility to use constitutional methods. Therefore, the ACLU of Wisconsin is seeking additional information on some of the review panel’s recommendations. For instance, we are disappointed that there is a recommendation that officers receive formal training in crowd control tactics and operations, without explicitly including training on the rights of demonstrators in groups.

“The ACLU of Wisconsin hopes that this report is not the end of dialogue on campus over the constitutional rules governing campus demonstrations.”

The ACLU of Wisconsin has approximately 8,500 members who support its efforts to defend the civil liberties and civil rights of all Wisconsin residents. For more on the work of the ACLU of Wisconsin, visit our [webpage](#). You can also get news and opinion on civil liberties in Wisconsin on our [Cap City Liberty blog](#). Find us on [Facebook and Twitter at ACLUMadison and ACLUofWisconsin](#).

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