

PRESS RELEASE:

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Frederick County Coalition Demand County and State Officials Call for Sheriff Jenkins' Immediate Resignation and the Appointment of a Replacement Who Prioritizes Public Safety Over Politics

A press conference will be held in downtown Frederick just hours after Frederick Sheriff Chuck Jenkins' arraignment in Baltimore on federal criminal charges related to a scheme to bring machine guns into the county for profit and political favors.

When voters went to the polls in November and elected Jenkins for a fifth term, they did not know that Jenkins was under investigation for an illegal scheme to bring dangerous weapons into Frederick County for profit and political favors. But Jenkins did know. During the campaign, he had been aware of the investigation and looming indictment for at least six months, yet still withheld this highly relevant and critically important information from the public.

Given this profound dereliction of duty and the very serious charges brought against Jenkins by the U.S. Department of Justice, we believe it is the responsibility of county and state elected officials, including Gov. Wes Moore and Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater, to restore public trust by demanding that Jenkins promptly submit his resignation. We also call on public officials to launch investigations into what other corrupt arrangements the Sheriff might have made to abuse the power of his office for political favors and personal financial profit.

Jenkins' latest violation of the public's trust is part of a pattern of obscuring the truth while fear-mongering for political gain. Jenkins has always prioritized maintaining his position of power over the best interests of the community.

Chuck Jenkins' dangerous leadership and association with hate groups has helped entrench extremist and White supremacist views into policing in Frederick County, undermining commendable efforts by other elected officials as well as members of his own department, civic groups to make our county a safe and inclusive community for all residents. [A just published release from the Southern Poverty Law Center](#) notes, "Jenkins has refused to enforce federal gun laws and said he will deputize his citizens to circumvent the law." Indeed, Jenkins's active involvement in the so-called "Constitutional Sheriffs" movement, and advocacy of its bizarre anti-democratic ideology that asserts sheriffs have authority that supersedes that of state and federal governments, makes our community more lawless, and less safe.

Jenkins' hardline anti-immigrant ideology has compromised public safety and cost taxpayers. Under Jenkins' participation in the Federal 287(g) program that facilitates cooperation with ICE's deportation machine, the Frederick County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) has made multiple arrests of undocumented immigrants apparently triggered by racial profiling. Some of the plaintiffs successfully sued Frederick County for wrongful arrest and harassment. The county eventually [settled multiple lawsuits](#) that left local taxpayers on the hook for over one million dollars. FCSO's own arrest data reported in its 2018 Administrative Review shows staggering racial disparities, disproportionately impacting Black residents. While Black residents represent 10% of the countywide population, in 2018 they accounted for 27% of the adult arrests and 40% of the juvenile arrests by the FCSO.

Once Jenkins' reign of riding roughshod over the civil rights of immigrants and people of color is finally ended, Frederick County will urgently need a new approach to public safety based on equity, accountability and community trust. This begins with whomever Governor Moore appoints if and when Jenkins is removed. Our new sheriff must be a person of undoubted integrity committed to public safety for all Frederick County residents.

QUOTES:

- **Nick Steiner, ACLU of Maryland, Staff attorney:** "Sheriff Jenkins has inflicted so much pain on the families of Frederick's immigrant community, and after over a decade of acting like he rules over Frederick as its Sheriff, he is now being charged with federal crimes that seem indicative of his character as a self-serving, above-the-law racist. Frederick immigrants sued him for racial profiling, and now the Department of Justice is prosecuting him for gun crimes and fraud. Jenkins must be held accountable for his actions as Sheriff of this County."
- **MD State Senator Karen Lewis Young:** "Given the extremely serious criminal charges that our County Sheriff is facing, I believe that he should go on administrative leave immediately until these allegations are resolved. Moreover, administrative leave is a precedent for members of the sheriff's department that are facing serious charges. No one is above the law! Finally, it is obvious that the General Assembly must establish a clear process for the removal or suspension of a sheriff. This is not the first time that our County has faced this issue."
- **Mari Lee, President of Frederick County Democratic Central Committee:** (From already released statement): "The residents of Frederick County deserve leadership that is open, transparent and operates with integrity. By refusing to take a leave of absence, Chuck Jenkins will force the FCSO to operate under a continuing cloud of uncertainty and controversy, which is no way for an entity entrusted with public safety to operate... Why does Sheriff Jenkins not believe he should follow the same behavioral standards as those who report to him?"
- **Yewande Oladeinde, President of Nigerians in Frederick:** "Sheriff Jenkins has been very open about his anti-immigration stance and his association with various anti-immigrant groups. When I think about the issue of mass shootings we face in this country on an almost daily basis due to lack of gun control, to know that our Sheriff is allegedly part of a plan to

obtain guns for a private business to lease to individuals makes me very uneasy. For me as an immigrant, this is a public safety issue, and puts all Frederick County residents at risk.”

- **Jessica Douglass, Gun violence prevention advocate/Frederick County resident:** “This Sheriff’s refusal to step down during the ATF’s investigation is a refusal to acknowledge the gravity of these charges, and is a slap in the face to all Frederick County citizens committed to public safety.”
- **Roberto Juarez, RISE Coalition:** “Frederick residents of color, both born here and immigrants, have for too long had to deal with racist policing. Black and immigrant residents of Frederick have been making sure we’re heard in saying enough is enough. No racial profiling. No 287g and criminalizing immigrants. No cop is above the law. We want Frederick to actually be livable and safe for all of us. We want our elected leaders in Frederick to stand up for our safety and call on Sheriff Jenkins to resign. The more time we waste letting Jenkins’ disregard for the law and deep associations with hate groups slide by, the further we move from that promise.”

RISE Coalition and Community Leaders

PRESS CONFERENCE DETAILS:

WHEN: Wednesday April 12 at 6 pm

WHERE: At the steps of Winchester Hall, 12 East Church Street Frederick, Maryland