

MY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE STATEMENT

By Alison Moses¹

I DO NOT WANT THE COUNTY COUNCIL TO CUT FUNDING FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN MCPS. Here's why:

Restorative justice is a philosophy and set of practices that focus on repairing harm caused by wrongdoing or conflict. Unlike traditional punitive justice systems, which primarily focus on punishing offenders, restorative justice aims to address the needs of victims, offenders, and the community by promoting accountability, healing, and reconciliation. Key components of restorative justice include dialogue, empathy, responsibility-taking, and community involvement.

I am a Unitarian Universalist. I believe in restorative justice because it is a humane way of dealing with human beings that are either at loggerheads or are engaged in some kind of conflict. Restorative justice does not seek to undermine the inherent dignity of all human beings. Though I cannot be here today, I still wanted to share some of my thoughts on why restorative justice is of utmost importance. Restorative justice fits into social and racial justice struggles that I am involved in, in several ways.

First it addresses systemic inequalities. Restorative justice acknowledges that systemic injustices, including racism and social inequities, contribute to conflict and harm within communities. By addressing these root causes and involving affected communities in the resolution process, restorative justice can help to address underlying social and racial injustices.

Secondly, it empowers marginalized communities. Restorative justice empowers marginalized communities by giving them a voice in the resolution process. By involving victims, offenders, and community members in dialogue and decision-making, restorative justice can help to shift power dynamics and ensure that the needs of marginalized groups are addressed.

Third, restorative justice prioritizes healing and reconciliation over punishment, which can be particularly important in cases of racial or social harm. By providing opportunities for

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dialogue and understanding between victims and offenders, restorative justice can help to foster healing and repair relationships within communities.

Lastly, by reducing recidivism and promoting community safety, restorative justice has been shown to be effective in reducing recidivism rates and promoting community safety. By addressing the underlying causes of conflict and harm, restorative justice interventions can help to prevent future incidents and build stronger, more resilient communities.

Overall, restorative justice offers a holistic approach to addressing social and racial justice struggles by promoting accountability, healing, and reconciliation within communities affected by harm and injustice.