

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

June 13, 2025

**Mayor Lisa Brown**  
**City Council President Betsy Wilkerson**  
**Spokane Police Chief Kevin Hall**  
**Spokane City Council**

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Michele Storms  
*Executive Director*

***RE: Protecting Protest Rights and Responsible Crowd Control Ahead of  
Planned Demonstrations***

Dear Mayor Brown, President Wilkerson, Chief Hall, and Councilmembers,

As planned demonstrations are expected to continue in Spokane this weekend, the ACLU of Washington writes to emphasize the City's obligation to uphold the constitutional rights of all people to engage in protest and collective expression, particularly in the face of ongoing immigration enforcement and widespread community concern.

While law enforcement has the authority to maintain public safety, that responsibility must be balanced with the constitutional rights to free speech, assembly, and dissent. The tactics used during the June 11 protest—including chemical agents and less-lethal munitions deployed against largely peaceful demonstrators—raise serious concerns about the proportionality and necessity of such force. The use of crowd control weapons, especially in response to civil disobedience, must be tightly controlled, transparent, and in line with constitutional protections and best practices.

We urge the City of Spokane and Spokane Police Department to take the following actions ahead of and during this weekend's demonstrations:

- **Affirm the right to protest:** Clearly communicate to the public and to law enforcement officers that protest—including forms of civil disobedience—must be met with restraint and a presumption of lawful expression, not immediate escalation.
- **Reject the use of militarized force:** Publicly commit to not deploying military assets or requesting assistance from the National Guard in response to protest activity.

- **Deploy crowd control measures safely and as a last resort:** Any use of chemical agents, impact munitions, or mass arrest tactics must meet the highest standards of necessity, clarity of warning, and accountability. Officers should use de-escalation as the default strategy.
- **Ensure transparency:** Proactively release after-action reports, use-of-force documentation, and body-worn camera footage where crowd control measures are used.
- **Center community voices:** Engage directly with trusted local organizers and advocates before, during, and after protests to build transparency and public trust.

Spokane has an opportunity to show that it will protect civil liberties while maintaining public safety—not by escalating conflict, but by modeling accountability and proportionality.

We are available to discuss any of these points further and welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively to protect the rights and safety of all Spokane residents.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jazmyn Clark

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cc: City Attorney Mike Piccolo