



# MINNESOTA POLICE AND PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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October 30, 2020

Governor Tim Walz  
130 State Capitol, 75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz,

The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association has recently learned several departments in your administration are counseling teachers and parents to use materials which instill fear of police officers in young children. It was reported to us [this book video](#) was used as a book report assignment (with no teacher interaction) yesterday in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Echo Park Elementary in Burnsville, Minn.

Upon further research, we learned the book "Something Happened In Our Town" is recommended by both the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) and [Minnesota Department of Education](#) as a resource for young children to have discussions about race. However, this book leaves children with the impression police officers are not there for the public safety of their communities and even suggests that children should fear police officers.

Language in this book leaves the impression unchecked that police officers routinely pull over, arrest, and kill black people without consequence. It says cops are "mean to black people" or "shot them because they were black" or police officers "stick up for each other" to help police officers get away with doing bad things. This book encourages children to fear police officers as unfair, violent, and racist.

There are worthy discussions for our state to have surrounding race and equity in society and what children can do to be part of a more just world. We absolutely support making stronger community connections and bring people together. But divisive language that leaves children with the false impression police officers are out to hurt people based on the color of their skin is defamatory, wrong, and harms genuine public safety efforts.

Our members deserve better from the state than to see their profession demonized. Their families deserve better from the state than to see their loved ones who risk their lives disparaged and unfairly cast as violent or racist, and we hope you agree.

The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association respectfully requests the state cease the recommendation and use of this book as a form of instruction for elementary aged children and request a follow-up conversation on the approval process of this book.

Sincerely,

Brian Peters, Executive Director  
Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association