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Charles Pagano  
President  
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236 Grand St  
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October 7, 2021

**RE: Excessive Use of Force BY School Resource Officer and Gender-Neutral Bathrooms and Safe School Environments for LGBTQIA+ Students**

Mr. Pagano and Fellow Board Members

I am Robert Goodrich, executive director of R.A.C.C.E. a local advocacy organization fighting for racial justice in our schools. Tonight I would like to address three issues. The first is the most recent use of excessive force by a Waterbury Police Officer on a child who attends West Side Middle School. The video of the confirmed incident is disturbing and should outrage us all. No police officer, especially a School Resource Officer should ever use this type of force and potentially deadly tactics on a child. I attached a screenshot of this. While not a perfect image it clearly shows the officer with his hand on the back of the child's head and his knee on the side of the neck of this student. This is unacceptable. Furthering this dilemma is our police chief's denial of this happening. As a board you must investigate this incident and provide clear recommendations to the police department to end these practices.

Second, at the last Policy Committee meeting the idea and usefulness of implementing gender neutral bathrooms was forwarded but that was tainted by Commissioner Stango's bigoted and intolerant views of gender-minority students. As a board you must keep a clear record of your meetings and his comments were so offensive and unspooled that they must be noted in the minutes verbatim, as they are not currently. Mr. Stango should recuse himself from this process and seek training and support to address his bias both implicitly and explicitly towards the LGBTQIA+ community.

Finally, I want to thank the board members and the district leadership who have taken on the responsibility of upholding state and federal laws that ensure a safe learning environment for gender-minority students. However I must urge you all to make a transformative change by substantially providing bathrooms, lockerrooms, and other safe spaces for our LGTBQIA+ student. This means fully funding and collaboratively designing these spaces in every school. Anything less is a failure.

Respectfully,

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The Waterbury Observer

We were contacted this morni...



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