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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

SELAH ALLIANCE FOR  
EQUALITY, COURTNEY  
HERNANDEZ, REV. DONALD  
DAVIS JR., LAURA PEREZ,  
ANITA CALLAHAN, KALAH  
JAMES, CHARLOTTE TOWN,  
AMANDA WATSON, and ANNA  
WHITLOCK,

Plaintiffs

v.

CITY OF SELAH; SHERRY  
RAYMOND, in her official capacity  
as Mayor of the City of Selah; and  
DONALD WAYMAN, in his  
official capacity as City  
Administrator for the City of Selah;

Defendants.

No.

**DECLARATION OF COURTNEY  
HERNANDEZ IN SUPPORT OF  
PLAINTIFFS' COMPLAINT**

I, COURTNEY HERNANDEZ, declare:

1. I am over the age of 18 and am competent to be a witness in this proceeding. I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth herein and if called to testify, I could and would testify completely thereto.

2. I am a current resident of the City of Yakima, Washington. I grew up in the City of Selah, which is in Yakima County, and attended Selah High School. I have lived in Yakima County for nearly my entire life, besides when I attended college at the University of Washington and remained in Seattle for a few years after. I then returned to Yakima County to attend Heritage University where I received a master's degree in teaching. I am currently a middle school teacher in Yakima

1 County. I drive to Selah daily to see my mother, grandmother, and sisters who all  
2 live in Selah.

3 3. I am also an Administrator of the Selah Alliance For Equality  
4 (“S.A.F.E.”) and share an equal decision-making role with each of S.A.F.E.’s other  
5 five Administrators. I also lead S.A.F.E.’s Activism working group. The Activism  
6 working group is tasked with planning events to further S.A.F.E.’s mission of  
7 equality and inclusion in Selah.

8 4. Growing up in Selah, I was one of the only Black students at my school.  
9 People often made assumptions about me based on the color of my skin before  
10 getting to know me and treated me differently from my predominantly white  
11 classmates. My negative experience growing up in Selah played a role in my  
12 decision to live in the City of Yakima rather than Selah after college.

13 5. This June, my friend and I planned the first Black Lives Matter marches  
14 in the cities of Yakima and Selah.

15 6. The march in downtown Yakima went well. We had several speakers  
16 and the Yakima Police Department provided protection for the protesters. We had  
17 no problems with city officials. I felt safe at the march.

18 7. The march in Selah was immediately met with hostility that we did not  
19 face during the Yakima march. I shared the march on Facebook as a public event. I  
20 am part of several Selah community social media pages and, through those pages,  
21 learned that community members were not receptive to the Black Lives Matter  
22 movement. I read several posts from community members stating that they would  
23 be coming to the march with concealed firearms. When we approached Selah law  
24 enforcement to provide protection to the protesters, they opted not to work with us  
25 like Yakima law enforcement had.  
26

1           8. I reached out to potential speakers for the Selah event that had spoken  
2 in the Yakima march. They declined to speak in Selah because they were worried  
3 about their safety. I was very anxious and fearful for my safety given the community  
4 response.

5           9. Despite my concerns for my own safety, I decided to move forward  
6 with the march in Selah because I believed it was important. First, I felt that it was  
7 important to remember the Black lives senselessly lost at the hands of law  
8 enforcement all over our country. Second, I wanted to ensure that nothing like that  
9 would happen in my hometown. My experience in Selah as a Black person has been  
10 challenging. I want to communicate that there are more Black people than many  
11 people realize in Selah and that we deserve to be seen, heard, and treated equally.  
12 Ultimately, about 100-150 people came to the march to support the Black Lives  
13 Matter movement in Selah.

14           10. City officials' comments made me believe that the City did not support  
15 the march. Specifically, City Administrator Donald Wayman has labeled Black  
16 Lives Matter a "neo-Marxist organization" that is "devoid of intellect."

17           11. After the march in June, I organized some chalk art demonstrations in  
18 Selah. These events were, again, not well-received in Selah. I learned that City  
19 officials or private citizens removed the chalk art at each event by dumping water  
20 on it.

21           12. S.A.F.E was created with this backdrop. Once I became an  
22 Administrator of S.A.F.E., I took part in approving the S.A.F.E. signs that S.A.F.E.  
23 planned to place throughout Selah. Unfortunately, just as City officials removed our  
24 chalk art, they removed S.A.F.E.'s signs as well. It is my understanding that City  
25 officials are doing so based on Selah Municipal Code Chapter 10.38. I have not  
26

1 witnessed the City remove other signs with the same vigor that they have removed  
2 S.A.F.E.'s signs.

3 13. We have extended multiple olive branches to the City throughout the  
4 past several months. We had several meetings with Mayor Raymond, but she  
5 declined to consider even our most minimal requests. Each meeting felt very tense  
6 and personal. The City's aggression towards us shows that racial equality is not a  
7 concern to the City.

8 14. Mayor Raymond also identified me and other activists by name in the  
9 July 28, 2020 City council meeting, putting a target on our back in a community  
10 where so many are opposed to the Black Lives Matter movement. Notably, she only  
11 called out people of color and a person married to a person of color. My sisters have  
12 faced worsened discrimination and bullying at school based on their association with  
13 the Black Lives Matter movement. My sister was easily identified with the  
14 movement based on Mayor Raymond's comments. Mayor Raymond's comments  
15 did not consider my or my family's welfare. My sister has transferred to a school  
16 district outside of Selah.

17 15. I am incredibly frustrated by the City's actions. The City's removal of  
18 S.A.F.E.'s signs is only the latest iteration of its attempt to silence messages  
19 supporting equality and inclusion. This makes people of color feel even more  
20 unwanted and unsafe. It also makes it difficult to promote necessary change.  
21 Ultimately, we would like to work with the City to name a street after John Lewis or  
22 Martin Luther King Jr., provide cultural competency training for police officers,  
23 fund a domestic violence shelter, and shift funding from police services to more  
24 mental health services.  
25  
26

1           16. I feel that my voice and viewpoints are being stifled by the City and its  
2 uneven and unfair enforcement of its municipal code. On behalf of myself as an  
3 individual, and on behalf of S.A.F.E. as a member, we bring this lawsuit to protect  
4 our ability to further voice and further our mission.  
5

6  
7 s/Courtney Hernandez  
Courtney Hernandez

12/7/2020  
Date