

Pennsylvania residents, students protest and speak out in support of “Quakertown 5”

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It has been more than a week since high school students in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, were attacked by police for staging a peaceful protest against the ongoing attacks on immigrants. Video of police, including Quakertown Police Chief Scott McElree, assaulting and choking a student on February 20 has sparked outrage in Pennsylvania and throughout the country.

In response to police violence, multiple protests have been held and local town meetings have been packed with angry residents demanding the police be held accountable and the charges against the students dropped. The Bucks County District Attorney has refused to state exactly how many students are facing charges, but as of this writing, it appears multiple students are facing felony aggravated assault charges.

Five students were taken into police custody the day of the protest. Three students were held in juvenile detention for four days after the police assault before being released last Tuesday. The status of the remaining two remains unclear as of this writing, but it appears at least one is still in police custody more than a week after the incident.

While students have been locked up and face the possibility of years in prison, McElree, who was not wearing a police uniform and did not identify himself when he laid hands on students, has yet to be charged with a crime. This is despite clear video evidence demonstrating that McElree initiated the attack.

In addition to being police chief, McElree is the Quakertown city manager. He continues to collect a paycheck while on vacation, courtesy of the taxpayers. On Friday, Quakertown Borough Solicitor Peter Nelson confirmed to multiple outlets that McElree is receiving workers' compensation while on leave.

On Friday multiple protests were held in

Pennsylvania in support of the “Quakertown 5.” In Souderton, Pennsylvania, a roughly 20-minute drive from Quakertown, over 30 students walked out of class to protest Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and demand charges against the Quakertown students be dropped.

That same day in Doylestown, located about 14 miles (22 kilometers) south of Quakertown, residents and students also held a protest in support of the students. Roughly 40 people attended the protest, with many holding signs denouncing the police and the Trump administration.

Several protesters spoke with the *World Socialist Web Site* at the Doylestown protest. One Quakertown resident said she came to the demonstration because “I care about the kids, and I think that they deserve to be able to voice their opinion without being put into a chokehold.” She added that Chief McElree “should be immediately fired, if not arrested for his crimes.”

She added that she was “the child of an undocumented immigrant who was deported, when I was four years old, for speeding. He crossed the border to Canada, and they told him he was never allowed back.

“And I haven't seen him in the US since. So, yeah, I feel very strongly against ICE, and everyone deserves to feel safe in their home, their workplace. Nobody's illegal on stolen land.”

Another protester told the WSWS, “I'm down here because Scott McElree abused those children in the street.” She added, “The fact that he's holding two positions of power is extremely confusing for all of us. He needs to be prosecuted and held accountable for his actions.” She concluded, “I think it's absolutely disgusting what the ICE agents are doing and how regular law enforcement is acting.”

A man attending the protest wearing a red hat with white letters that read: “Make Palestine Free Again” told the WSWS, “I am down here because the kids from the Quakertown High School were demonstrating as an act of resistance. And the powers that be do not like that.

“Whether it’s Palestinian resistance, Mexican resistance, American resistance, we are all connected. It is all about human rights. We are all human, and we all deserve a decent place to live.”



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