

Campaign Launch Statement

Organizing Committee for the Resignation of Keith Ervin

Learn more about our campaign at linktr.ee/resignkeith or tricitiesworker.wordpress.com/resign. Contact us on Instagram @resign_keith_ervin or email us at peoplesdefensejc@proton.me.

In early April, we, the people of Washington County, the Tri-Cities, and soon the U.S. as a whole, were appalled, disgusted, and horrified when footage of Keith Ervin at a School Board was released that showed him sexually harassing and touching a student from his own former high school. School Board members and officers on the scene were caught laughing, or saying nothing all together. To cover up their tracks, they hosted an emergency School Board meeting mired in bureaucracy and excuses. Despite public outrage calling for his resignation, they did nothing but censure him— a meaningless symbolic gesture they had already employed in 2009 against a similar incident of Ervin making sexually-explicit gestures at an entire classroom of students. Look where that got us.

At that meeting, someone was targeted, assaulted, arrested, and charged with a crime he did not commit by notorious fascist Sheriff Keith Sexton and his lackeys. Benjamin Putland did what countless others were doing: speaking without permission, expressing his freedom of speech on public property. This was a message from the School Board and their police thugs that they do not care one bit about the people whose lives, children, education, and rights they affect and supposedly “represent.” While Keith Ervin was given less than a slap on the wrist, Benjamin was crammed in a jail cell stained with feces and blood, denied medical attention and safe drinking water, until community members were able to bail him out. His charges were immediately dropped the next day. The contradiction between Ben’s false imprisonment and Keith Ervin’s impunity reveals what is already clear to many of us. There can be no true justice, no true “due process,” no true “democracy” as long as political power remains in the hands of our oppressors and exploiters, rather than the people who comprise the majority of our society.

On April 19th, The Tri-Cities Worker and People’s Defense - Johnson City hosted a People’s Tribunal, an exercise in the political power we know the masses will someday seize for themselves. The attendees unanimously found Keith Ervin, Keith Sexton, and the Washington County School Board as a whole *guilty* for their crimes against our community. With this verdict, they came upon a sentence. It is obvious that Keith Ervin can and must be replaced. But how? Some people advocate that we utilize the same system that put Ervin in power to get him out, that he must either be voted out on Election Day, or the people that previously voted for him must petition his re-call. Regardless of how unrealistic these strategies are, if one of them did actually succeed, it would not prevent Ervin from simply running and being elected again. Furthermore, these strategies, precisely due to their systematically-entrenched nature, are entirely limited to the decisions of a minority of Washington County residents, those living in District 1, and thus an even smaller minority of Tri-Citians— despite this affecting all of us. The attendees at our People’s Tribunal chose an alternative path, one that is not limited by our ready-made state apparatus, one that can extend far beyond arbitrary districting and election procedures.

The Organizing Committee established on 04/19 is proud to announce the launch of our campaign to pressure Keith Ervin into *permanent resignation*. We do not care what Party you are affiliated to. We do not care what district you live in. We do not care if you’re legally

allowed to vote. If you want Keith Ervin out of office, you can become an intrinsic part of the movement to do just that. Are you a high-school student? You can plan a walk-out. Are you a parent or teacher? You can endlessly agitate at PTA meetings. Do you have a phone? You can contact the School Board and state your demands. Are you literally anyone in the Tri-Cities? You can propagate our demands. You can attend our mobilizations. You can boycott Ervin's co-op. You can *apply pressure*. And when the overwhelming amount of us who demand Ervin's resignation unite as one, the pressure will become too much. Our oppressors are fickle creatures. They are out-numbered and parasitic. And just as they make us bend to their will, we can make them bend to our's. Simply put, the only way to guarantee Ervin's permanent replacement is to make his position too costly to maintain, so much so that the man himself will have no choice but to step down. The people, united, will never be defeated. And the only way to unite ourselves is to spit in the face of all arbitrary divisions, affiliations, procedures, and barriers that separate us.

More information will be released in the future regarding concrete actions you can engage in. For now, you can visit our tool-kit, sign our demand letter, contact your "representatives," and propagate our flyers, but most importantly, don't let your righteous fury burn out. Be the spark that lights a prairie fire.

WE, THE PARENTS, STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND WORKERS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY AND THE TRI-CITIES, HEREBY DEMAND THAT KEITH ERVIN PERMANENTLY RESIGN FROM HIS POSITION AS WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE OF DISTRICT 1 DUE TO HIS SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF THE STUDENTS WHOM HE'S SUPPOSED TO PROTECT. ONLY WITH HIS PERMANENT REPLACEMENT WILL THE WOUNDS HE LEFT ON OUR COMMUNITY BEGIN TO HEAL.

RESIGN KEITH ERVIN

NO PEDOS IN OUR SCHOOLS

THE PEOPLE UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED