



## Statement on ASU Mass Arrests

*Tuesday, April 30th, 2024*

United Campus Workers AZ, CWA Local 7065, strongly condemns Arizona State University's violent repression of the student-led encampment protesting the ongoing genocide in Palestine. We stand in full support of the 72 student, staff, alumni, and community protestors, many of whom are members of our union, who were arrested and the countless more who were harmed by the University administration's and ASU Police Department's decision to call in Tempe Police, County Sheriff's Office, and Arizona State Troopers to violently dismantle the encampment. We demand that all charges be dropped immediately.

Arizona State University is a public university, established for working Arizonans, that frequently touts its "commitment" to free speech. Despite this, ASU administration invited police and state troopers in full riot gear to round up and mass arrest the protestors. 72 total arrests of largely working-class people puts ASU among the top five campuses for highest number of arrests out of the dozens of similar protests ongoing at universities across the country. This outcome of the protest was neither inevitable nor necessary; it was a choice the ASU administration made.

This heavy-handed shutdown of a peaceful demonstration highlights the contradictions in ASU's "commitment" to free speech and the disparity between how right-wing speech and left-wing speech are treated. When a queer ASU faculty member is assaulted on campus, ASU administration says "free speech" to claim their hands are tied. When students, staff and faculty sit peacefully on the lawn to protest the ongoing genocide in Palestine, ASU administration orders in state troopers in riot gear. This is the latest in an ongoing campaign by President Crow's administration to suppress the voices of working-class members of the ASU community, the very people our union was established to protect. A few months ago, ASU administration canceled a talk by US Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, hosted by a coalition of student groups, at the last minute. Even before then, Crow rapidly issued a statement in support of Israel after October 7 and joined a pro-Israel coalition of colleges and universities. This, combined with ASU administration's continued silence regarding the ongoing genocide in Palestine, makes it difficult to see this repression as anything other than a clear ideological statement. ASU administration furthered this message by allowing counter-protestors to assist police in dismantling the encampment and by failing to condemn ASU Chief of Police Michael





Thompson's actions in vandalizing students' and union members' property the morning of the demonstration.

Students, staff, faculty, including members of our union, all have a constitutional right to freedom of speech, to peaceful assembly, and to protest. This freedom is not contingent on the support of the ASU administration nor whether such speech aligns with President Crow's personal "vision" for the university. The ASU Charter, written by Crow himself, states that ASU assumes "fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves". The actions of Crow's administration - the continued attempts to stifle free speech and divide students and union members from their community - have failed to live up to this statement. ASU administrators must cease their repression of speech on campus and ensure no further violence comes to those exercising their constitutional right to dissent.

We call on the ASU administration to take responsibility for its actions and repair the harm it has done to the students, community members, and members of our union by:

- Provide immediate and total amnesty for all protestors and people arrested, as well as for all union members, students, staff, and faculty who have been disciplined for speaking out for Palestinian Liberation.
- Require the immediate resignation of ASU Chief of Police Michael Thompson.
- Cooperate with students, union members, and interested community organizations to provide a space for healing and reparations.
- Stand down and allow the peaceful protest to continue while engaging in good faith with the students to hear and meet their demands.
- Reinstate MEChA de ASU and stop the frivolous investigations into pro-Palestinian student organizations, some of which include union members.
- Provide a formal public apology from President Michael Crow and the ASU administration to the protestors, the people arrested, and the broader community.

Finally, we reaffirm our call, alongside the broader labor movement, for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, an end to the genocide, and for the basic human rights of the Palestinian people to be restored.

In solidarity,

The United Campus Workers of Arizona, CWA Local 7065

