CPS Principal, Staff Stymied Police Investigation of Mass Shooting at Pilsen High School, Emails, Interviews Show

May 28, 2024

In the first crucial hours, police could not get access to video surveillance, a witness and other key information in a shooting that left two students dead, two wounded. CPS says it cooperated.
The Police Department for Fired Cops

May 28, 2024

An analysis of state data shows that 17% of all police officers hired by the Robbins Police Department since 2000 came on board directly after they were fired from previous law enforcement jobs, the most of any department in Illinois. Those hires include two cops who lied about what they saw the night Laquan McDonald was murdered.

Court Clerk’s Error Exposed Data
Involving Thousands of Juvenile Defendants, Violating State Law

May 28, 2024

A clerk’s office spokesman called the exposure “brief, non-damaging and limited in nature.” But a top county official says it was only the office’s latest failure.

Dad Found Guilty in Abuse Death of 8-year-old Peoria Boy Navin Jones

May 28, 2024
A Peoria jury convicted Brandon Walker of murder in a trial that highlighted the failures of DCFS to remove 8-year-old Navin Jones from his parents’ care.

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**Illinois Taxpayers Shell Out Hundreds of Millions as Prison Reform Lawsuits Grind On**

May 28, 2024
The settlement agreements have prompted major changes for incarcerated people who are deaf, mentally ill or under the care of the state prison’s beleaguered healthcare system, but advocates argue more needs to be done.

What Happens at the End of a ShotSpotter Contract?

May 28, 2024
As Chicago decides whether to end the controversial service that alerts police to gunshots, the city of Dayton, which canceled its contract, may offer some lessons.

Alderperson Says Migrants Are Causing TB Outbreaks at Police Stations, But It’s Not True

May 28, 2024
Housing migrants temporarily at Chicago police stations is no one’s first choice, but a rapidly growing number of asylum seekers arriving in the city from border communities in Texas have left city leaders struggling to respond — with few options.

Ald. Ray Lopez (15th) has been one of the loudest critics of housing new arrivals at police stations, pointing out that Chicago police officers aren’t properly equipped to help.

The outspoken alderperson has also been known to routinely send out controversial messages about the health of migrants and how they are endangering the wellbeing of police officers. Lopez recently tweeted migrants were spreading tuberculosis to officers.

Is this before or after the tuberculosis infecting our officers? https://t.co/w3G259PnKn

— Ald. Raymond Lopez (@RaymondALopez) May 19, 2023

It’s a serious charge that would mean an additional public health crisis the city
would be forced to deal with.

But it’s not true.

Andrew Buchanan, spokesman for the Chicago Department of Public Health, said there hasn’t been a single confirmed case of tuberculosis among migrants staying at police stations nor any cases among Chicago police officers.

“While this is a challenging situation, we do not consider this a public health crisis, and reports that migrants may be the source of disease spread in Chicago are inaccurate and can fuel xenophobia,” Buchanan said.

When an Illinois Answers Project reporter informed Lopez there weren’t any reports of tuberculosis, he doubled down on his claim, alleging the city health department was actively concealing the number of positive tuberculosis cases.

Lopez offered no evidence to prove his theory but anecdotally said he first learned about the tuberculosis issue from an officer in the 18th District who claimed to have respiratory problems because of tuberculosis. Lopez wouldn’t name the officer.

State law mandates that hospitals and clinics report any positive cases of tuberculosis to the city health department, so it would know whether there was an outbreak. If CDPH was hiding reported cases of tuberculosis in the public it could face major regulatory action.

CDPH is also working alongside the city’s Department of Family and Support Services, Cook County Health and many community-based health and social service providers who conduct health screenings on new arrivals — making it more difficult to conceal such an outbreak.

But why does Lopez believe CDPH is somehow conspiring to hide cases of tuberculosis from the public?

Lopez said the department is working to hide any viral outbreak or the spread of communicable diseases because if it were made public it would be evidence of the failures of former Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s administration approach to the migrant crisis.

“To be honest, I put no faith in whatever they say,” Lopez said. “They are so
agenda driven."

When asked why they would need to cover for Lightfoot since she is no longer in office, Lopez said CDPH’s commissioner, Dr. Allison Arwady, is fighting for her job. Mayor Brandon Johnson has said he plans to keep Arwady in her role, at least for now.

“Arwady is trying to keep her job and she is representing the clearest failure of our government,” Lopez said. “It wouldn’t be the first time that people played politics.”

Buchanan said Lopez’s allegations against Arwady and CDPH are “of course, untrue” but wouldn’t “otherwise be addressing them.”

As for Lopez, he sees himself as the only one willing to be honest about the current migrant situation.

“Politics is playing over the safety of the public, and you are putting our officers at risk and also putting their families at risk and putting people who walk into those police stations looking for help at risk,” Lopez said.

Lopez helped block a plan to use $51 million from the city’s surplus funds at the City Council meeting last week which would’ve helped new arrivals. It is only a temporary block as the City Council looks to vote on approving the funds on Wednesday.

More and more officers, Lopez said, are filling out “Report of Exposure to Communicable Disease” forms over the past few months where they are not only reporting tuberculosis exposure but also measles, chickenpox and shingles.

Such reports, though, are not medical documents and are not completed by a physician. It’s more akin to an incident report than a confirmed positive case of a communicable disease.

“While there have been confirmed cases of chicken pox among migrants, it is important to note that due to high vaccination coverage, vaccine-preventable diseases like measles, mumps, rubella, polio, and varicella (chicken pox) are rare in the U.S,” Buchanan said. “Most Chicagoans are protected through routine childhood vaccinations or in some cases through childhood infections.”
Still, Lopez believes CDPH and other city leaders are pretending migrants are “coming here with a clean bill of health.”

The Chicago Police Department directed questions regarding its officers contracting viruses from migrants to CDPH.

A meeting at Wright College on the Northwest Side last week was held to share a plan to house new arrivals for the summer. It was met with boos with some residents falsely declaring asylum seekers were bringing diseases into the neighborhood.

The city has welcomed more than 10,000 migrants since the first Texas bus was sent to Chicago last year, according to city officials. Nearly 750 migrants are staying in police districts, waiting to be placed in a shelter or respite center.

Lopez contends he wants to help migrants come here by providing them with health care and housing but city policies continue to fail them.

Ald. Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez (33rd) said she was taken aback by his claim that migrants were spreading tuberculosis.

“I have been working on this crisis from the beginning, and we know what it looks like in the police stations,” Rodriguez Sanchez said. “We know the precarious position we are in, and this is not doing anything to help.”

In Albany Park, which is part of Rodriguez Sanchez’s ward, 20 migrant families have moved into stable housing. She said the number may not sound like much but the coordination and care for the new arrivals are immense.

Block Club Chicago reported earlier this month that five families moved into private rooms at Christ Lutheran Church with the help of Rodriguez Sanchez and dozens of neighbors.

Rodriguez Sanchez said spreading misinformation only dehumanizes people seeking help and stokes fear.

“We have seen this up close, we have seen sick children, we’ve seen people who came to Chicago from a very long journey,” Rodriguez Sanchez said. “And to think that an alderman who is supposed to be a leader of a community is spreading misinformation. Nobody has tuberculosis.”
Rodriguez Sanchez said she and other alderpersons were aware of a rumor going around but it was quickly disproven.

“Comments like this make it harder for us to find help because people aren’t as open to hosting and become scared or skeptical,” Rodriguez Sanchez said. “I hope he finds it in his heart to stop doing that.”

Ald. Byron Sigcho-Lopez (25th) has also been an outspoken critic of the lack of help from the city but has refrained from attacking new arrivals.

“These comments are absolutely harmful and shameful from an elected official who represents an immigrant community,” Sigcho-Lopez said. “It plays into the Fox fake news ... and further erodes the trust in our public institutions ... ”

Lopez dismissed the criticism.

“I am not concerned that some people are upset with me telling the truth, but unlike some of my colleagues, I am starting off at a point of truth,” Lopez said. “My colleagues are the ones who have failed the migrants who are here seeking for something better.”

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**Police Officer Suicides Tripled in Two Years As CPD ‘Stalled’ on Progress With Consent Decree**

May 28, 2024
Chicago Police Department efforts to bolster wellness program under the consent decree were faltered because of a lack of data and risk losing compliance in some instances

Chicago Police’s Foot Pursuit Policy Explained

May 28, 2024
A police officer seemingly adhered to the Chicago Police Department’s foot pursuit policy — still cost him his life

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Big talk, slow progress from Mayor Lightfoot on anti-violence programs

May 28, 2024
City Hall touts its $410M plan to fight crime but has spent little money; some cash goes to street outreach groups with no experience or troubled leadership.