

Solidarity!: Protesters march for Adam Toledo



Activists flocked to the State House last night to hold a solidarity rally and march for Adam Toledo and other victims of police brutality. Toledo was a 13-year-old shot and killed by a Chicago police officer last month, with explicit body cam footage of the event only released last week. State and city law enforcement watched from inside the State House and the end of the mall.

The event was organized by Enriques Sanchez, a political activist and organizer with local direct action groups, shortly after he watched the body cam footage last Thursday. “It just continues the same pattern that Black and brown people continue to be pushed around, continue to be killed, continued to be executed by the police around the country,” he said in his opening remarks. There were no specific speakers for the rally, and there was an open invite to the crowd to speak.

“We have a right to rebel, we have a right to exist,” said one speaker from the Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL). Others invoked the name of those killed by police violence: Tamir Rice, George Floyd and others. Youth advocates from the Providence Student Union strongly argued for the removal of student resource officers from public schools, alleging that the guns they carry were not the most dangerous thing, but the psychological impacts when students are arrested by officers in the school and taken out in handcuffs.

One speaker, an older, female POC, recounted the time a Providence College student called law enforcement on her after she asked the student to move his car from the front of her home. According to her account, five police officers showed up. “The system is broken,” she said. “It’s been broken.”

Protesters soon after marched across downtown, keeping to the right lines when possible, but for the most part taking up the street. The crowd marched down Francis Street passing the mall, with police cruisers slowly following behind. The march took a right onto Sabin, before going down Empire Street and turning northeast onto Weybosset. Protesters stopped in front of PPAC to hold a moment of silence.

Throughout the march, protesters chanted, "No justice, no peace," and promised the "pigs" (law enforcement) that "we'll be back!" as they passed police stationed along the route.

Two members of noted far-right extremist group the Proud Boys were embedded inside the march from the beginning. While the march was stopped in front of PPAC by the corner of Richmond Street, Sanchez identified them in the crowd for the benefit of the marchers and politely asked the two Proud Boys to walk away. The crowd chanted, "Fascists go home, racists go home," and a small segment chased them back down Weybosset where they got into a car and drove away.

The march resumed without any other incident. Protesters went down Weybosset, pausing at the corner of Westminster and Exchange streets, before crossing over to Memorial Boulevard where they followed the river back to Providence Place. Back in front of the State House, there were a few more speakers and a third moment of silence.