White silence is white violence. These are words that I’ve been thinking a lot about lately. But thinking can only take us so far. Which is why like so many people in our community, I took to the streets this week. To listen to Black voices, to mourn for Black lives, and to bear witness to the state-sanctioned brutality experienced by Black people when they stand up to white superiority.

But white violence isn’t just pepper spray and rubber bullets and flash grenades and batons. It’s imposing a 5 PM curfew at 4:46 PM. It’s asking the DOJ to prematurely lift its consent decree. It’s calling in the National Guard. It’s prioritizing Amazon’s interests over creating a livable city. It’s believing Black bodies are replaceable, but property is not. It’s redlining. It’s gentrification. It’s the school to prison pipeline. It’s education funded by property taxes. It’s mass incarceration. It’s “not seeing color.” It’s celebrating Columbus Day. It’s the denial of white privilege. It’s letting racist jokes slide. It’s racist team mascots. It’s hair discrimination. It’s saying all lives matter. It’s incorrectly appropriating the work of MLK. It’s not listening when Black and brown Americans tell you that you’ve hurt them. It’s being unteachable. It’s prioritizing order over justice.

The May 30 demonstration had barely started when the Seattle Police Department threw flash grenades into the crowd and tear gassed people trying to run away. I know this because I was there. There was no dispersal warning. Police had their body cameras off and badge numbers covered. There were children and families and elderly folks and dogs and teenagers, which didn’t seem to matter as they threw grenades and gassed us.

We support the city’s decision to withdraw their motion asking for an end to federal oversight of the Seattle Police Department, and we thank the dedicated activists and protesters who pushed for this to happen. We also know that we still have a lot of progress to make before we can truly establish racial justice in King County, and we are working to determine how we can best leverage the League’s strengths and support existing efforts to help make this a reality.

To our Black and non-white members — we see you and we stand with you. We will do better to make that known.

To our white members — now is the time to educate yourselves and talk about racial injustice in your homes, with your friends, and in your community. We’ll be disseminating information to help you get started, and please know that we’re always here to talk.

To our city and county leaders and law enforcement — you can count on us to hold you accountable.

We know that this statement is not enough. We’ll be back with more.

Black lives matter. Stay powerful.

Alyssa Weed, President