

## **HAMPTON LETTER SENT TO ALL 50 ALDERMEN**

*The following letter was sent to all fifty aldermen regarding “Chairman Fred Hampton Way.”*

March 17, 2006

### **RE: HAMPTON STREET SIGN**

Dear Alderman

On behalf of the 17,500 active and retired members of the Chicago Police Department that make up the membership of the Fraternal Order of Police Chicago Lodge 7, I’m writing in hopes of making you more fully understand our position in naming a section of a west side street “Chairman Fred Hampton Way.” Our position is not one of us against them or black against white, our position is one of right against wrong, and it is wrong to consider naming a street after Hampton.

It’s wrong because he represented a group of individuals who promoted terrorism and extortion in their community in addition to violence and killing in the community of Chicago, and all of America, at large. Their mantra of “offing the pigs” resonated not only in their rhetoric and publications, but also in “coloring books” distributed to the young children they sporadically fed. They fed the stomachs of these children while at the same time, poisoning their minds. Their “mantra” and the venom they spread met with a high degree of success. As a result of their efforts, there were nine law enforcement officers killed by the Panthers across the country, many having been ambushed. Here in Chicago, Officers Frank Rappaport and John Gilhooly were ambushed and killed by members of this street gang. Additionally, numerous Officers nationwide have been wounded in attempted murders by these same members. Extradition efforts continue for a Panther, Gary Freeman, who shot and disabled another Chicago Police Officer before fleeing to Canada where, more than 30 years later, he has been located.

There have been “feelings” and “opinions” expressed as to how Fred Hampton was killed and why. There was a federal grand jury that investigated the allegations of Panther members including, then Panther Minister of Defense, Bobby Rush. Based upon irresponsible allegations at the time Hampton was executed, a federal investigation was conducted which cleared those accused of wrongdoing. A later civil suit which garnered the families of those killed and wounded in the incident a monetary award, absolutely does not justify the continued allegations of any criminal act.

This request has been brought forward by Congressman Bobby Rush, who is currently seeking re-election; and Hampton’s son, who was recently released from prison after being convicted and sentenced for fire bombing businesses in our Englewood Community. Former Panther Minister of Defense Rush has blatantly and publicly scorned Superintendent Phil Cline as being biased and a racist after the Superintendent

expressed his opinion about the re-naming of the west side street. This latest irresponsible outburst of Congressman Rush is in the same pattern established since his days as a Panther, and Fred Hampton Jr. is continuing the legacy of his father in victimizing the members of the Chicago Community at large. Are these really the right people to make recommendations in renamings in honorarium of someone they feel is worthy? You cannot allow history to be re-written for their political and personal reasons.

To rename a Chicago street, no matter how small, after the likes of a Fred Hampton, is a slap in the face to some of the true heroes of the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Robert Sengstack. There is a factual, historical basis for honoring them that is non-existent in Hampton's case. The factual basis that cries out against this injustice is also found, to this day, in the families, friends and co-workers of the Officers that were killed. This recommendation has outraged them. Are you, as elected representatives of all of the people of the City of Chicago, ready to re-write factual history to appease the feelings and beliefs of some? At the same time are you also ready to open wounds that have had over 36 years of healing at the request of members of a group that called for the killing of Police Officers and advocated for civil unrest? Most importantly for your consideration, are you willing to offend the thousands of Police Officers who every day put their hearts into their work in doing the right thing for all the people of our City?

The Civil Rights Movement in this country is a necessary chapter in our history and growth as a nation. Countless injustices have been addressed for the betterment of all and this movement continues its important work today. The Panthers were a blight on and in that history and, in particular, on the communities they professed to serve.

Sincerely,  
Mark Donahue