



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Compounding Injustice in Ferguson

RUBEN DIAZ November 26, 2014

What You Should Know

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### **Compounding Injustice in Ferguson**

You should know that in the wake of the November 24, 2014 Grand Jury ruling that Police Officer Darren Wilson would not be indicted for killing Michael Brown, demonstrations have erupted all over this nation - especially in Ferguson, Missouri.

People are frustrated and hurt and disappointed, and I agree that they have reason to be frustrated, hurt and extremely disappointed. What I cannot agree with is the way people are expressing their frustration.

As you know, it was a White Police Officer who took the life of a Black youth. This is not the first time this has happened. There have been many occasions where Blacks and Hispanics have had their lives taken by White police officers - and there are even times when the police officers are not White.

My point is that I cannot understand why people in Ferguson, Missouri are taking out their frustration by hurting their own people by burning and looting businesses in their own community.

You should know that it is not easy for Blacks and Hispanics and Asians to create and own their own businesses. Many people from our communities are struggling to keep our own businesses, like bodegas, shoe stores, beauty salons, car repair shops, etc. It is very hard to keep those businesses growing so people can take care of their families, raise their children, and pay their bills.

As you may know, Ferguson, Missouri is a mostly minority community and most of the businesses located there are owned by Black women and men and serve the needs of Black families.

This week's demonstrations in Ferguson are destroying the businesses and properties in a minority community - a community that has already been hurt by a great injustice. On Tuesday morning, there were 25 buildings on fire in Ferguson, including AutoZone, Little Caesars, Walgreens, Juanita's Fashions R Boutique, Family Dollar store and a local beauty shop. Forty Ferguson-area businesses have been destroyed, including a Chinese restaurant, a Mexican Restaurant, a beauty supply store and other black-owned businesses. These businesses were vandalized and looted, with windows being smashed.

On August 9, 2014 there was a great injustice when the White Police Officer Darren Wilson killed an unarmed Black 18-year old. There was further injustice when Ferguson Prosecutor Robert McCulloch's grand jury failed to bring criminal charges against Darren Wilson for shooting and killing Michael Brown. But there is an even bigger injustice taking place in a riot-scarred community that is burning down its own businesses and destroying the community.

When schools in our communities have to be closed because of violence in the streets, our children are the ones who are affected. When businesses in our communities are forced to close, our people have to travel into other communities to buy things we need for our families - making our lives more difficult. As people express rage and violence on the streets of our communities, our communities are being paralyzed.

Ladies and gentlemen, don't get me wrong. I feel the pain in our community that was caused by the actions of Police Officer Darren Wilson. I understand all too well the pain and the anger that results when people from other communities come into our communities to hurt us, but I don't understand how or why any of us would want to compound the injustice by continuing to destroy the minority-owned businesses in our own communities.

If someone can explain that to me, please do.

This is Senator Rev Rubén Díaz, and this is what you should know.