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Local radical group wants to “Re-create 68” at Democratic Convention

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Denver City
Councilman
Charlie Brown

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During the 1968 Democratic National Convention, protesters swarmed the Logan statue in Chicago's Grant Park. Many violent protests marred the convention and blemished the image of both the convention and Chicago. Ultimately, the violence cost the Democratic Party votes and paved the way for the election of Republican Richard Nixon. Photo from Chicago Sun-Times archives

The year 1968 was a time of violence and distress in America. Two revered political figures, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy, were murdered. Young men who had been drafted to fight in Vietnam returned to a public so hostile that soldiers who wore their uniforms in public were spat at and subjected to profane verbal abuse. Dissension ripped apart families, riots and tear gas marred urban streets, and the country as a whole nearly became dysfunctional. For people who lived through the era or truly have studied 20th Century history, 1968 is an example of what the people of the United States should avoid.

Yet a radical group is threatening to bring that kind of disruption and social wreckage to the streets of Denver in August 2008 during the Democratic National Convention. The group calls itself Re-create 68, a moniker that reveals much about its collective ignorance of history and apparent intent to disobey the law.

Worse, some members of Denver City Council drafted a resolution that would have handcuffed law enforcement's ability to prevent violence and so would have endorsed the radical group's aims. Fortunately, Council President Michael Hancock pulled the resolution off Monday's agenda. Councilman Charlie Brown, one of the resolution's leading opponents, had told Hancock about his well-founded concerns. Councilman Brown thanked Council President Hancock for his decision.

But the demise of this resolution doesn't resolve all the concerns. Brown firmly believes in respecting people's right to protest, but Re-create 68 is *Cont. page 2*

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Radicals want to impose their own crowd-control rules on city

demanding more than its right to free speech and peaceful assembly. The group essentially wanted Denver to promise not to use certain well-established law enforcement tactics, such as deploying officers on horseback to control crowds before events get out of hand. That demand raises questions about what Re-create 68 plans to do in Denver next summer.

Brown believes that protest groups should be able to exercise their rights, but he also believes that all protesters, regardless of their political views, should follow the law.

Of course Denver expects its police to behave in a responsible, professional manner and to avoid overreactions and provocations. But the city's officers and especially the public safety department's top officials don't need someone dictating how they do their jobs.

The resolution was pointless — unless its real aim was to have city council endorse radicalism and a not-so-veiled threat to bring chaos to Denver's streets and public places.

Such threats are flying over the Internet. Re-create 68's Web site proclaims "*Join us in the streets of Denver as we resist a two-party system that allows imperialism and racism to continue unrestrained.*" The site also says Re-create 68 will "*resist a two-party system that allows imperialism and racism to continue unrestrained.*"

Another radical Website, "Smash the Conventions in 2008," seeks to rally "anarchists" for "Denver's Day Off," an effort to "shut down the city."

People who remember what the 1968 riots really were like absolutely do not want to allow such mayhem to be re-created in Denver or anywhere else in the country. More than 225 protesters and police officers got hurt.



Shell Shocked In south Denver?



Egg-tossing vandals smeared Councilman Brown's home just a day after Brown was interviewed by newspapers and television reporters and made appearances on the Dave Logan and Dan Caplis / Craig Silverman radio shows regarding his strong opposition to the Re-create 68 group's radical resolution.

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Re-create 68's threats and demands will make it harder for Denver to raise funds to pay for the convention, as private businesses won't want to associate themselves with an event that could be smeared by violence.

Denver police have an impressive track record of being able to handle large crowds without violence or serious incidents. The city successfully hosted the 1993 World Youth Day (attendance: 175,000); the G-8 Summit in 1997 attended by world leaders; and the 2005 NBA All-Star Game, which had been plagued by street crime in other cities but in Denver was calm.

“We will demand change by making the Democratic Convention of 1968 look like a small get together in 2008!” —from Re-Create 68's Website

What's being undermined by Re-create 68's threats is not the war in Iraq or the perceived privileges of the rich. What's being harmed is the goal of having an intense but peaceful discussion about the political and policy future of this nation, without any hint of violence or intimidation. Denver believes in free speech, but not violence.

Brown to protest groups: Sign non-violent pledge, then we'll talk

Before the city administration sits down to “negotiate” with protest groups, the protest groups should first be required to sign a non-violence pledge promising that they will obey all federal, state and local laws as they conduct protests during the 2008 Democratic National Convention.

“Protest groups shouldn't impose their rules on the city. The city should be setting the rules,” Brown said.

“While it's important to establish a dialogue with protest groups and listen to their concerns, we should do so only after they agree to renounce violence,” he added.

Protesters should promise to respect private property and businesses; submit applications for permits; avoid interfering with police doing their jobs; not possess weapons, hurl objects, incite riots, start fires or cause mass disturbances. They then should be firmly held to their pledge.

Editorial voices oppose radical threats

Rocky Mountain News

From the Rocky Mountain News' editorial page, Wednesday June 6, 2007:

“The Re-create 68 alliance brags on its Web site, “We will demand change by making the Democratic Convention of 1968 look like a small get together in 2008!” The Democratic convention of 1968 was in Chicago, and it was marred by bloody encounters between the police and protesters against the Vietnam war. . . . We're not remotely reassured by the Re-create 68 Web site, which says the group “was created for all the grass-roots people who are tired of being sold out by the Democratic Party.” It promises four “Days of Resistance” during the convention, each one focusing on one “symptom of the disease of an Imperialist, Capitalist, Rascist (sic) system seen in our communities.” Given that truculent attitude, does the council really want to put itself on record as saying that it welcomes demonstrators “with the same respect and honor accorded to convention delegates?” How about waiting to see whether they act so as to deserve respect and honor?”

Grins, fun plentiful as kids get hooked on fishing at Washington Park derby

Eyes bright with wonder, the kids thought they were there to have fun. No one told them they were also learning, because knowing that might have spoiled their sun-lit enjoyment. The youngsters listened intently as grown-up experts told them about what kinds of fish live in Colorado, what other creatures live in our state's lakes and rivers, the anatomy of a fish and finally how to use a fishing rod.

About 30 youths ages 6 to 15 attended the June 5 fishing derby at Lily Pond in Washington Park. Each child was accompanied by a parent, guardian or other responsible adult. The event was presented by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and the Denver Parks and Recreation Department, and sponsored by FANS of Washington Park, Washington Park East Neighborhood Association and Canon Colorado Team at Your Castle Real Estate. *Photos by Meagan Mercer*

