

Certificate of Service

I certify that on this 2nd day of June 2021, I served Plaintiffs' Opposed Motion for Preliminary Injunction by hand delivery on:

Office of the City Clerk
City of Chicago
121 North LaSalle Street, Room 107
Chicago, IL 60602

I certify that on this 2nd day of June 2021, I also served by electronic mail Plaintiffs' Opposed Motion for Preliminary Injunction on:

Andrew Worseck
Chief Assistant Corporation Counsel
City of Chicago Department of Law
121 North LaSalle Street, Suite 600
Chicago, IL 60602
Andrew.Worseck@cityofchicago.org

/s/ Michael Bekesha
Michael Bekesha

II. Factual Background.¹

A. Mayor Lightfoot's Discriminatory Interview Policy.

On May 18, 2021, a Chicago reporter tweeted that Mayor Lightfoot's spokeswoman informed her that the mayor "is granting 1 on 1 interviews – only to Black or Brown journalists." Declaration of Michael Bekesha ("Bekesha Decl.") at Ex. A. On May 19, 2021, Mayor Lightfoot publicly released a letter, stating "By now, you have heard the news that on the occasion of the two-year anniversary of my inauguration as Mayor of this great City, I will be exclusively providing one-on-one interviews with journalists of color." Bekesha Decl., Ex. B. Mayor Lightfoot's two-year anniversary was May 20, 2021.

Since the announcement, Mayor Lightfoot has granted at least one interview request from a self-identified Latino reporter. Bekesha Decl., Ex. C. She has denied or failed to respond to interview requests from White reporters. *Id.* The announcement drew fierce scrutiny among the city's press corps and beyond. *Id.* Gregory Pratt, a city politics reporter for the Chicago Tribune and the son of an immigrant from Mexico "requested the mayor reconsider and grant interviews to all beat reporters and said when her spokesperson declined, Pratt canceled his own interview." Bekesha Decl., Ex. D. Charles Whitaker, dean at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, told the Chicago Tribune, "We would never, ever in a million years allow that of a white politician. [I]t's dangerous now to say we are going to allow that of a Black

¹ As Plaintiffs have not yet had the opportunity to conduct discovery, they ask the Court to consider Mayor Lightfoot's and her staff's public statements and published reports about the "journalists of color" only interview policy. *See City of Evanston v. N. Ill. Gas Co.*, 381 F. Supp. 3d 941, 948-949 (N.D. Ill. 2019) ("[E]videntiary rules are relaxed at the preliminary injunction stage, and the Court has substantial discretion to hear and receive evidence intended to preserve the relative positions of the parties until a trial on the merits can be held, whether or not that evidence complies with formal rules and procedures.") (internal citations omitted).

politician simply to make a point about the historic inequities in media.” Bekesha Decl., Ex. E. The National Association of Hispanic Journalists declared, “NAHJ does not condone restricting press access based on a journalist's race/ethnicity. Any action that threatens the cornerstone of our democracy and First Amendment rights is unacceptable.” Bekesha Decl., Ex. F.

B. Plaintiffs’ Request for an Interview Is Denied.

Thomas Catenacci is White. Declaration of Thomas Catenacci at ¶ 3. He also is a national reporter for the DCNF, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing original investigative reporting from a team of professional reporters that operates for the public benefit. *Id.* at ¶¶ 4-5. DCNF’s website reaches approximately three million unique monthly visitors and its content, which is available without charge to any eligible news publisher, is published by The Daily Caller, Yahoo News, Business Insider and a growing host of other media outlets, reaching a combined audience estimated in excess of 30 million readers. *Id.* at ¶ 5.

Like most news organizations, DDCF has regularly covered issues related to the pandemic, including how major cities across the country handled the pandemic as well as the pandemic’s impact on those cities’ economies. *Id.* at ¶6. As DDCF’s reporter assigned to cover labor issues, the U.S. economy, and American politics, Catenacci has published dozens of articles on those specific issues. *Id.* at ¶¶ 4 and 7. To do so, he requests interviews, statements, and answers to written questions from government officials and their offices. *Id.* at ¶ 8.

On May 20, 2021, Catenacci requested, by email, a one-on-one interview with Mayor Lightfoot. *Id.* at ¶9. Specifically, Catenacci seeks to interview Mayor Lightfoot about how her administration plans to encourage more residents to receive the coronavirus vaccine, considering that less than 50% of the city’s residents have been administered a single dose; why she believes Chicago is behind other major cities in their vaccination efforts; how her administration has

handled the pandemic compared to other major U.S. cities; and how she plans to encourage residents to eat and shop locally as Chicago's vaccinated population grows. *Id.* Catenacci's email contained a link to his Twitter account, which includes a picture of him. *Id.* at ¶ 10. Catenacci sent a follow-up email on May 21, 2021. *Id.* at ¶ 11. He also sent a third email on May 24, 2021. *Id.*

As of the filing of this motion, almost two weeks after his initial request, Mayor Lightfoot's office still has not responded to Catenacci's request nor has Mayor Lightfoot agreed to or sat for an interview with Catenacci. *Id.* at ¶ 12. By failing to respond in a timely manner, Mayor Lightfoot has denied Catenacci's request. This denial is pursuant to Mayor Lightfoot's announcement that she will only grant interview requests from "journalists of color."

III. Legal Standard.

The legal standard for granting a preliminary injunction is well established. As the Seventh Circuit recently reaffirmed:

To obtain a preliminary injunction, a plaintiff must show a reasonable likelihood of success on the merits, the absence of an adequate remedy at law, and a threat of irreparable harm without the injunction. If the plaintiff makes this showing, the court weighs two additional factors: the balance of harms – harm to the plaintiff if the injunction is erroneously denied versus harm to the defendant if the injunction is erroneously granted – and the effect of the injunction on the public interest.

Planned Parenthood of Ind & Ky., Inc. v. Adams, 937 F.3d 973, 980 (7th Cir. 2019).

IV. Argument.

A preliminary injunction is necessary to prevent Mayor Lightfoot from continuing to violate Plaintiffs' First Amendment rights as well as Catenacci's right to equal protection. With respect to a preliminary injunction to prevent a potential First Amendment violation, the Seventh Circuit has held, "[T]he likelihood of success on the merits will often be the determinative factor" because "[t]he loss of First Amendment freedoms, for even minimal periods of time,

unquestionably constitutes irreparable injury and money damages are therefore inadequate.” *Joelner v. Village of Wash. Park*, 378 F.3d 613, 620 (7th Cir. 2004) (internal quotations and citations omitted). Although the Seventh Circuit has not directly ruled on whether the same analysis applies to potential equal protection violations, courts within the circuit have. *See e.g., Exodus Refugee Immigration, Inc. v. Pence*, 165 F. Supp. 3d 718, 738 (S.D. Ind. 2016) (“Several judges in this district, including the undersigned, have concluded that this presumption also applies to equal protection violations.” (collecting cases)). Plaintiffs focus their argument on the likelihood of success.

A. Plaintiffs Will Likely Succeed on the Merits.

On a motion for a preliminary injunction, Plaintiffs “need only demonstrate that [they have] a ‘better than negligible’ chance of succeeding on the merits so that preliminary relief is justified.” *City of Evanston v. N. Ill. Gas Co.*, 381 F. Supp. 3d 941, 952 (N.D. Ill. 2019) (quoting *Ty, Inc. v. Jones Grp., Inc.*, 237 F.3d 891, 897 (7th Cir. 2001)). Plaintiffs easily satisfy this standard.

1. Mayor Lightfoot Is Violating Catenacci’s Right to Equal Protection.

“The central purpose of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment,” which prohibits a state from depriving persons within its jurisdiction of equal protection of the laws, “is the prevention of official conduct discriminating on the basis of race.” *Washington v. Davis*, 426 U.S. 229, 239 (1976). “A plaintiff asserting an equal protection violation must establish that a state actor has treated him differently from persons of a different race and that the state actor did so purposefully.” *Billings v. Madison Metro. Sch. Dist.*, 259 F.3d 807, 812 (7th Cir. 2001).

Mayor Lightfoot is treating persons differently based on their race. In her May 19, 2021, letter, she wrote, “I will be exclusively providing one-on-one interviews with journalists of color.” See Exhibit B to Bekesha Decl. When Catenacci submitted his interview request (on Mayor Lightfoot’s two-year anniversary), Mayor Lightfoot’s policy of only granting interviews to “journalists of color” was in effect. Catenacci is not a “journalist of color.” He requested an interview with Mayor Lightfoot on the anniversary of her taking office to ask about how her administration plans to encourage more residents to receive the coronavirus vaccine, considering that less than 50% of the city’s residents have been administered a single dose; why she believes Chicago is behind other major cities in their vaccination efforts; how her administration has handled the pandemic compared to other major U.S. cities; and how she plans to encourage residents to eat and shop locally as Chicago’s vaccinated population grows. When her office did not respond to his request, he followed up twice but with the same result. The failure to provide a timely response is no different than a denial, especially in light of the “journalists of color” only interview policy. Catenacci is being denied an interview of Mayor Lightfoot because of his race.

The government may discriminate based on race in some circumstances. *Billings*, 259 F.3d at 815. This is not one of those circumstances. In the rare instances in which racial discrimination is allowed, the government must demonstrate that the race-based classification promotes a compelling government interest and that the race-based classification is narrowly tailored to serve a compelling state interest. *Id.* Mayor Lightfoot has not identified any judicially recognized compelling interests for discriminating against journalists who are not “of color.” Nor has she demonstrated that denying interviews to journalists who are not “of color” is

narrowly tailored to serve those unidentified interests. Catenacci therefore has an excellent chance of succeeding on his equal protection claim.

2. Mayor Lightfoot is Violating Plaintiffs' First Amendment Rights.

Just a few weeks ago, the Seventh Circuit reiterated, “The importance of a free press to our founders was memorialized in the First Amendment which prohibits the government from abridging the freedom of press.” *John K. Maciver Inst. for Pub. Policy, Inc. v. Evers*, 994 F.3d 602, 605 (7th Cir. 2021). It also reaffirmed:

[T]he importance that this court and the Supreme Court have placed on newsgathering and its fundamental role in allowing citizens “to see, examine, and be informed of their government,” not just for its own sake but so as to enable citizens to form their own judgments on matters of public concern and choose qualified representatives. “The press serves and was designed to serve as a powerful antidote to any abuses of power by governmental officials and as a constitutionally chosen means for keeping officials elected by the people responsible to all the people whom they were selected to serve.”

John K. Maciver Inst., 994 F.3d at 614-615 (internal citations omitted).²

Because of the well-recognized importance of the press and newsgathering, courts must “look carefully at any claim that a government entity is disallowing access to the media or a particular subset thereof.” *John K. Maciver Inst.*, 994 F.3d at 615. In *John K. Maciver Inst.*, the plaintiff sought “to attend a limited-access press conference – an event that is not open to the public and not held on government property dedicated to open communication.” *Id.* at 610. In deciding that case, the Court determined that the plaintiff sought access to a nonpublic forum.

² Mayor Lightfoot expressed similar sentiments in her May 19, 2021 letter. She wrote, “The press corps is the filter through which much of what we do in government is dissected and explained to the public. It is essential for a healthy democratic society and an accountable government.” Bekesha Decl., Ex. B.

Id. Without conceding the nonpublic forum analysis applies here, Mayor Lightfoot cannot satisfy even the nonpublic forum test.

A government official may limit “access to a nonpublic forum ... based on subject matter and speaker identity so long as the distinctions drawn are reasonable in light of the purpose served by the forum and are viewpoint neutral.” *Id.* (quoting *Cornelius v. NAACP*, 473 U.S. 788, 806 (1985)). In *John K. Maciver Inst.*, the government official limited access to press conferences based on five factors. 994 F.3d at 606. The first three factors were “reasonably related” to the “goal of increasing the journalistic impact of the Governor’s messages by including media that focus primarily on news dissemination, have some longevity in the business, and possess the ability to craft newsworthy stories.” *Id.* The fourth and fifth were “reasonably related” to the “goal of increasing journalistic integrity by favoring media that avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest or entanglement with special interest groups, or those that engage in advocacy or lobbying.” *Id.* at 610. In other words, the criteria used were related to the purpose served by the forum, namely newsgathering.

Mayor Lightfoot’s policy to only grant interview requests from “journalists of color” is not reasonable. The policy does not further the journalistic impact of the mayor’s message or increase journalistic integrity as in *John K. Maciver Inst.* 994 F.3d at 606. The only criterion is race, and there is no reasonably related reason for why only journalists of certain races should be allowed to interview Mayor Lightfoot. Plaintiffs do not dispute that Mayor Lightfoot may deny interview requests, including theirs. However, those denials must be “reasonable.” *John K. Maciver Inst.*, 994 F.3d at 610.

In essence, Mayor Lightfoot's position is that a government official may exclude persons of certain races from nonpublic forums without running afoul of the First Amendment.³ Plaintiffs have found no case in which a court has authorized a government official to deny access to a nonpublic forum on such a basis. Plaintiffs also cannot envision a circumstance in which such limitation would not run afoul of the Equal Protection Clause. In other words, because Mayor Lightfoot is violating Catenacci's right to equal protection, she is also violating Plaintiffs' First Amendment rights. Plaintiffs have a "better than negligible" chance of succeeding on their First Amendment claim.

B. Plaintiffs Are Suffering Irreparable Harm, and Thus There Is No Adequate Remedy at Law.

Whether an adequate remedy at law exists often is considered together with whether there is irreparable harm. *Libertarian Party v. Packard*, 741 F.2d 981, 984 (7th Cir. 1984). Irreparable harm exists when the harm "cannot be prevented or fully rectified by the final judgment after trial." *Roland Mach. Co. v. Dresser Indus., Inc.*, 749 F.2d 380, 386 (7th Cir. 1984). And as noted above, the Supreme Court has held, "The loss of First Amendment freedoms, for even minimal periods of time, unquestionably constitutes irreparable injury." *Elrod v. Burns*, 427 U.S. 347, 373 (1976).

The harm suffered by Plaintiffs will not be prevented or fully rectified by a final judgment. In addition to the fact that Plaintiffs' First Amendment rights and Catenacci's right of

³ If this were the case, Mayor Lightfoot could prevent American Indians from exercising their First Amendment rights in terminals at Midway Airport (*International Soc. for Krishna Consciousness v. Lee*, 505 U.S. 672 (1992)), Black voters from exercising their First Amendment rights from City polling places (*Minn. Voters All. v. Mansky*, 138 S. Ct. 1876, 1886 (2018)), Latino residents from placing signs on City utility poles (*City Council v. Taxpayers for Vincent*, 466 U.S. 789 (1984)), and Asian candidates from participating in political debates on the Chicago Access Network Television (*Arkansas Educational Television Commission v. Forbes*, 523 U.S. 666 (1998)).

equal protection are being violated, Plaintiffs are investigating and intend to publish an article about how major cities are encouraging residents to receive the coronavirus vaccine and whether they are being successful at doing so; how major cities are handling the pandemic, especially as there is (or was) a push to reopen the country in time to celebrate the Memorial Day and July 4th holidays; and how major cities are seeking to boost their local economies, including if they plan to encourage residents to eat and shop locally as the vaccinated population grows. If Plaintiffs do not have the opportunity to ask Mayor Lightfoot about these issues until after a final judgment, such questions will be obsolete. A preliminary injunction is necessary to prevent any further harm.

C. The Balance of Harms Favors a Preliminary Injunction.

Although the case law makes clear that “[t]he higher the likelihood of success on the merits, the less decisively the balance of harms needs to tilt in” Plaintiffs’ favor (*Planned Parenthood of Ind & Ky., Inc. v. Adams*, 937 F.3d 973, 980 (7th Cir. 2019), the balance of harms here overwhelmingly favors a preliminary injunction. Where the irreparable harm to Plaintiffs is clear, “there can be no irreparable harm to a municipality when it is prevented from” taking unconstitutional action. *Joelner v. Village of Wash. Park*, 378 F.3d 613, 620 (7th Cir. 2004). If the Court determines that Plaintiffs are likely to succeed on the merits, there is little, if any, harm to Mayor Lightfoot by preliminarily enjoining her from violating Plaintiffs’ First Amendment rights and Catenacci’s right to equal protection.

D. A Preliminary Injunction Serves the Public Interest.

The Fourth Circuit has pointedly declared, “Surely, upholding constitutional rights serves the public interest.” *Newsom v. Albemarle County Sch. Bd.*, 354 F.3d 249, 261 (4th Cir. 2003); *Joelner*, 378 F.3d at 620 (7th Cir. 2004). Like the irreparable harm factor, if the Court

determines that Plaintiffs are likely to succeed on the merits, there is no identifiable public interest in allowing Mayor Lightfoot to violate Plaintiffs' First Amendment rights and Catenacci's right to equal protection. A preliminary injunction is warranted.

V. **Conclusion.**

For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiffs respectfully request that the Court preliminarily enjoin Mayor Lightfoot from continuing to deny Plaintiffs' interview request on the basis of Plaintiff Catenacci's race.

Dated: June 2, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Paul J. Orfanedes
Paul J. Orfanedes
(Ill. Bar No. 6205255)
Michael Bekesha
(*Pro Hac Vice* motion pending)
JUDICIAL WATCH, INC.
425 Third Street, S.W., Suite 800
Washington, DC 20024
Tel: (202) 646-5172
Fax: (202) 646-5199

/s/ Christine Svenson
Christine Svenson
(Ill. Bar No. 6230370)
SVENSON LAW OFFICES
505 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 350
Chicago, IL 60654
Tel: (312) 467-2900

Counsel for Plaintiffs

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on this 2nd day of June 2021, I served Plaintiffs' Memorandum of Law in Support of their Opposed Motion for Preliminary Injunction by hand delivery on:

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Andrew.Worseck@cityofchicago.org

/s/ Michael Bekesha
Michael Bekesha

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION**

THOMAS CATENACCI, <i>et al.</i> ,)	
)	
Plaintiffs,)	
)	Case Number: 21-cv-02852
v.)	
)	
LORI LIGHTFOOT, in Her Official Capacity)	
As Mayor of the City of Chicago,)	
)	
Defendant.)	
)	

DECLARATION OF MICHAEL BEKESHA

I, Michael Bekesha, declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney employed by Judicial Watch, Inc. and counsel for Plaintiffs in the above-captioned matter. I am over the age of eighteen and have personal knowledge of the matters set forth below.

2. Attached hereto as Exhibit A is a true and correct copy of a tweet by NBC Chicago Reporter Mary Ann Ahern, which I downloaded from and is available at <https://twitter.com/MaryAnnAhernNBC/status/1394766979450425360?s=20>.

3. Attached hereto as Exhibit B is a true and correct copy of Mayor Lightfoot’s letter dated May 19, 2021, which I downloaded from and is available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/letter-from-chicago-mayor-lori-lightfoot/89bc44f0-230f-40c4-89ea-5b5e5651d873/?itid=lk_inline_manual_4.

4. Attached as Exhibit C is a true and correct copy of Don Babwin and Sophia Tareen, *Chicago mayor: Reporters of color get 2-year mark interviews*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (May 19, 2021), which I downloaded from and is available at <https://apnews.com/article/chicago-race-and-ethnicity->

health-coronavirus-pandemic-business-d375e80176a09bb48d7084842ffcbe6f.

5. Attached as Exhibit D is a true and correct copy of Becky Vevea, *For Mid-Term Mark, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot Says She'll Only Talk To Reporters Of Color*, WBEZ (May 19, 2021), which I downloaded from and is available at <https://www.wbez.org/stories/at-mid-term-mark-chicago-mayor-lori-lightfoot-limits-who-shell-talk-to/4c6b65f5-ac31-4c72-a275-1dc6eb4bcdd6>.

6. Attached as Exhibit E is a true and correct copy of Alice Yin, *Mayor Lori Lightfoot chooses only reporters of color for interviews ahead of 2-year-anniversary, sparking debate over media diversity and access*, CHICAGO TRIBUNE (May 19, 2021), which I downloaded from and is available at <https://www.chicagotribune.com/politics/ct-lori-lightfoot-interviews-journalists-of-color-20210519-o6g2ksmaxjditmdainrfvrviia-story.html>.

7. Attached as Exhibit F is a true and correct copy of Craig Wall, *Mayor Lightfoot only granting interviews to reporters of color ahead of 2nd anniversary*, ABC7 (May 19, 2021), which I downloaded from and is available at <https://abc7chicago.com/chicago-mayor-lori-lightfoot-black-reporters-brown/10663890/>.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Washington, D.C. on this 2nd Day of June 2021.

/s/ Michael Bekesha
Michael Bekesha

Exhibit A



- # Explore
- Settings

Tweet

Mary Ann Ahern @MaryAnnAhernNBC

As @chicagomayor reaches her two year midway point as mayor, her spokeswoman says Lightfoot is granting 1 on 1 interviews - only to Black or Brown journalists



5:28 PM · May 18, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

1,180 Retweets 3,602 Quote Tweets 1,786 Likes

Melissa Sanchez @msanchezMIA · May 18

Replying to @MaryAnnAhernNBC and @chicagomayor

Interesting... does that mean @royalpratt gets more one on ones? 😏

3 1 58

Ronnie @ronniewriter · May 18



17

Ryan Steele @wrcrtchicago · May 18

Replying to @MaryAnnAhernNBC and @chicagomayor

That is only slightly racist!! But to be expected. SHE is judging people based on the color of their skin and not the content of their character. What a wonderful role model! NOT! She needs to be removed immediately.

10 11 501

Aurelius Raines II @aureliusraines2 · May 18

So. Real estate investment has a great history of judging people on the content of their skin-- I mean character.... I mean stop quoting King.

44 2 48

Show replies

Paris Schutz @paschutz · May 18

Replying to @MaryAnnAhernNBC and @chicagomayor

I was told the same thing.

31 19 180

Laughlin671 @laughlin671 · May 18

That's equity.

2 6

Show replies

Bob Gilbert @BobGilbert37 · May 18

Replying to @MaryAnnAhernNBC and @chicagomayor

Can you imagine if a white mayor did this???

48 43 1.6K

Show replies

New to Twitter?

Sign up now to get your own personalized timeline!

Sign up

Relevant people

Mary Ann Ahern @MaryAnnAhernNBC [Follow](#)

#PoliticalReporter NBC5 Chicago, BAJohnCarroll Univ, LoyolaRome, Fmr Teacher, MEdNortheastern, MSJNorthwesternMedill, NBC Peoria & Atlanta, Marquette Mom X 3

Mayor Lori Lightfoot @chicagomayor [Follow](#)

This account is maintained by city employees to share news, services and legislation relevant to residents of Chicago.

What's happening

Weather · LIVE

Atlantic hurricane season begins on June 1

Trending in United States

Gulf of Oman

Iran's largest Navy ship sank in the Gulf of Oman on Wednesday

9,652 Tweets

Wirecutter · 32 minutes ago

Amazon Prime Day will take place on June 21 and 22. Here's what you need to know.

Trending with Prime Day

Sports · Trending

Hayward

1,510 Tweets

COVID-19 · LIVE

COVID-19: News and updates for Washington, DC

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Exhibit B



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT
MAYOR

May 19, 2021

Good morning,

By now, you may have heard the news that on the occasion of the two-year anniversary of my inauguration as Mayor of this great City, I will be exclusively providing one-on-one interviews with journalists of color. As a person of color, I have throughout my adult life done everything that I can to fight for diversity and inclusion in every institution that I have been a part of and being Mayor makes me uniquely situated to shine a spotlight on this most important issue. I wanted to reach out to you directly to ensure you understand my thinking behind that decision.

As the first Black woman mayor of Chicago, and the first openly gay mayor, my election in 2019 was hailed for breaking barriers to the halls of power that had existed in our city for generations. I ran to break up the status quo that has failed so many residents across our city. And that failing status quo did not apply simply to City Hall and City government. It pertains and exists in all public and private institutions.

In the time since I was elected, our country has faced an historic reckoning around systemic racism. Organizations, corporations, educational institutions and more all across our city, our state and our country have declared new efforts to address the deep-seated legacies of institutionalized racism. In looking at the absence of diversity across the City Hall press corps and other newsrooms, sadly it does not appear that many of the media institutions in Chicago have caught on and truly have not embraced this moment.

I have been struck since my first day on the campaign trail back in 2018 by the overwhelming whiteness and maleness of Chicago media outlets, editorial boards, the political press corps, and yes, the City Hall press corps specifically. In the year 2021, with a Black, lesbian Mayor, a Black woman City Treasurer, a Latinx woman City Clerk and a majority Black and Latinx City Council, the group of reporters assigned to cover City Hall is practically all white. Many of them are smart and hard-working, savvy and skilled. But mostly white, nonetheless. Indeed, there are only a handful of beat reporters of color in the City Hall press corps. While there are women of color who sometimes cover my administration, there are zero women of color assigned to the City Hall beat. Zero. I find this unacceptable and I hope you do too.

The press corps is the filter through which much of what we do in government is dissected and explained to the public. It is essential for a healthy democratic society and an accountable government. And yet, despite the many talents and skills of our reporting corps, I fear this arm of our democratic system is on life support. The Chicago media leadership must evolve with the times, in order to be a true reflection of the vibrant, vast diversity of our city. Diversity matters and without it, how can you as the media truly speak to the needs and interests of the diverse and nuanced constituency you claim to serve until you do the work necessary to reflect that constituency.

There is almost no one in the editorial board rooms or in the City Hall press corps who has themselves lived the experience of a woman of color in the City of Chicago. The Crain's Chicago Business editorial board is entirely white. There are zero women of color on the Chicago Tribune editorial board. Almost all the major television networks in Chicago covering City Hall are led by white News Directors.

It is impossible for this glaring lack of diversity not to be reflected in the daily coverage of government, politics and city life every single day.

We are working hard to do our part. We host ethnic media roundtables, and work hard to prioritize outlets led by people of color. I or others from my administration regularly appear on Black and Latinx TV and radio stations, and we've also focused paid public service media ad dollars in that direction. We have worked to build diversity into our own communications team--our Digital Director is a Latinx woman and our lead Digital Strategist is an African American woman; our Deputy Communications Director is African American; our lead speechwriter is an African American woman; and two of our Deputy Press Secretaries are African American.

We have more to do, but as I always have said, equity and inclusion are the north stars of this administration, and that includes our own communications efforts.

Still, Black or Brown community leaders often reach out to me or my team to call our attention to implicit--or explicit--bias in one piece of coverage or another from your outlets. For the past two years, more often than not, we have debated internally, then chosen to say nothing, to let it go, lest we be accused of whining about negative coverage or of "playing the race card." And the truth is, it is too heavy a burden to bear, on top of all the other massive challenges our city faces in this moment, to also have to take on the labor of educating white, mostly male members of the news media about the perils and complexities of implicit bias. This isn't my job. It shouldn't be. I don't have time for it. But as with so many festering problems, it has only gotten worse with time. So here I am, like so many other Black women before me, having to call your attention to this problem. I have no power to make you change, but I hope that you will not just cover and express your opinion about the great and historic racial awakening that is rippling across all parts of our society. I hope that you too will see it for the opportunity that it is and embrace it by reflecting the change across your organizations.

We'll start here. At the two-year anniversary of my inauguration, I am issuing a challenge to you. Hire reporters of color--and especially women of color--to cover Chicago politics, and City Hall in particular. If you only have a white reporter covering City Hall, make sure there's a person of color working with them as well.

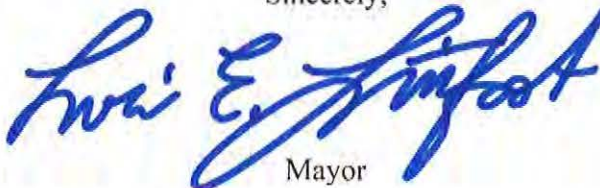
There are plenty of talented women reporters of color in Chicago for you to hire from, and that pool of talent is growing all the time.

Does your institution have an initiative set up to intentionally cultivate, recruit, support and retain young reporters of color in your ranks? Are there any people of color in your leadership teams or on your editorial boards? Are there qualified people of color on your team that could cover City Hall, but simply haven't been given the chance? Have you analyzed your own coverage to identify and root out implicit bias?

My team will always be responsive to your inquiries. We will always be transparent. But if the answer to these questions is no, be advised that I will continue to press for that to change.

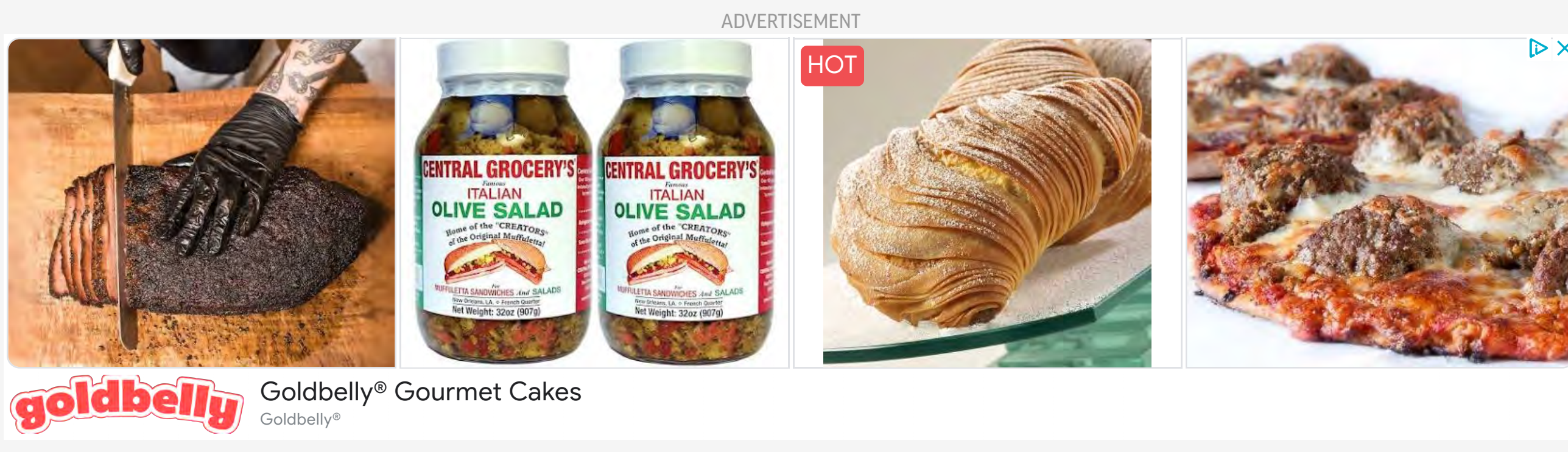
I look forward to hearing your response as to what you plan to do to address this concern.

Sincerely,



Mayor

Exhibit C



Chicago mayor: Reporters of color get 2-year mark interviews

By DON BABWIN and SOPHIA TAREEN May 19, 2021



CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced Wednesday that she will grant one-on-one interviews to mark the two-year anniversary of her inauguration solely to journalists of color, saying she has been struck by the “overwhelmingly” white press corps in Chicago.

“I ran to break up the status quo that was failing so many,” Lightfoot, who is Black, [tweeted](#), also issuing a detailed letter to City Hall reporters on her decision. “That isn’t just in City Hall. It’s a shame that in 2021, the City Hall press corps is overwhelmingly White in a city where more than half of the city identifies as Black, Latino, AAPI or Native American.”

While the move isn’t unprecedented in recent years, it drew fierce scrutiny among the city’s press corps and beyond with members of the media quickly taking Lightfoot to task for her decision.



Lightfoot’s choice was made public late Tuesday when longtime WMAQ-TV political reporter Mary Ann Ahern, who is white, [tweeted](#) about it — a post that drew more than 5,000 comments. Some praised the mayor, while others were angry.

“I am a Latino reporter @chicagotribune whose interview request was granted for today. However, I asked the mayor’s office to lift its condition on others and when they said no, we respectfully canceled,” [tweeted](#) Chicago Tribune City Hall reporter Gregory Pratt. “Politicians don’t get to choose who covers them.”

Ahern voiced a similar concern about the mayor deciding who she’ll talk to and said it looked like Lightfoot was avoiding City Hall reporters she often spars with.

“To choose a reporter based on the color of their skin is really pretty outrageous,” Ahern said on WGN Radio. “Does she think I’m racist? Is that what she’s saying?”

But others, including The TRiIBE, a Chicago-based digital Black-oriented media platform that offered extensive coverage of civil unrest in the wake of George Floyd’s death, among other topics, found the anger over the mayor’s decision offensive.

“With this outrage, y’all are implying that Black and Brown journalists aren’t capable of asking the hard questions,” TRiIBE [tweeted](#) Wednesday, saying it got an interview the same day.



Taking office in 2019, Lightfoot’s tenure has been marked by racial inequality issues, including a [Chicago teachers strike](#), city violence, the [coronavirus pandemic](#) and [policing](#). In her two-page letter she recalled being on the campaign trail and being struck “by the overwhelming whiteness and maleness of Chicago media outlets, editorial boards, the political press corps, and yes, the City Hall press corps specifically.”

She noted the nation’s reckoning on racism but said it didn’t appear “many of the media institutions in Chicago have caught on and truly have not embraced this moment.”

“The press corps is the filter through which much of what we do in government is dissected and explained to the public,” Lightfoot wrote. “And yet despite the many talents and skills of our reporting corps, I fear this arm of our democratic system is on life support. The Chicago media leadership must evolve with the times in order to be a true reflection of the vibrant, vast diversity of our city.”

Journalism has long grappled with lack of racial diversity. More than 75% of newsroom employees are white, according to a 2018 Pew Research Center analysis of census data. In turn, reporters of color note they’re often shut out when scoring high profile interviews.

To counteract that, recent leading public officials have been intentional about giving interviews to journalists of color.

U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the first Native American to lead a Cabinet department, granted the first interviews after confirmation to Native American journalists. The first sit-down interview Kamala Harris gave after being named vice presidential candidate was to The 19th, an outlet aimed at “elevating” women’s voices, including those of color.

Meanwhile in Chicago, other city leaders were critical of Lightfoot’s decision, including Alderman George Cardenas, who represents some largely Latino neighborhoods.

“How is that even true, be serious,” [he tweeted](#) in response to the announcement, saying it should be “corrected.”

Some media organizations said they were still being left out, including South Side Weekly. The nonprofit newspaper covers many heavily Black and Latino neighborhoods.

“Yes, for those who are asking, South Side Weekly did request an interview with @chicagomayor and unsurprisingly received no response and no fancy letter. But we’ve never relied on the mayor’s script to do our groundbreaking work. So it’s just another day over here,” [tweeted](#) editor-in-chief Jacqueline Serrato.

Sophia Tareen is a member of The Associated Press’ Race and Ethnicity Team. Follow her on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sophiatareen>.

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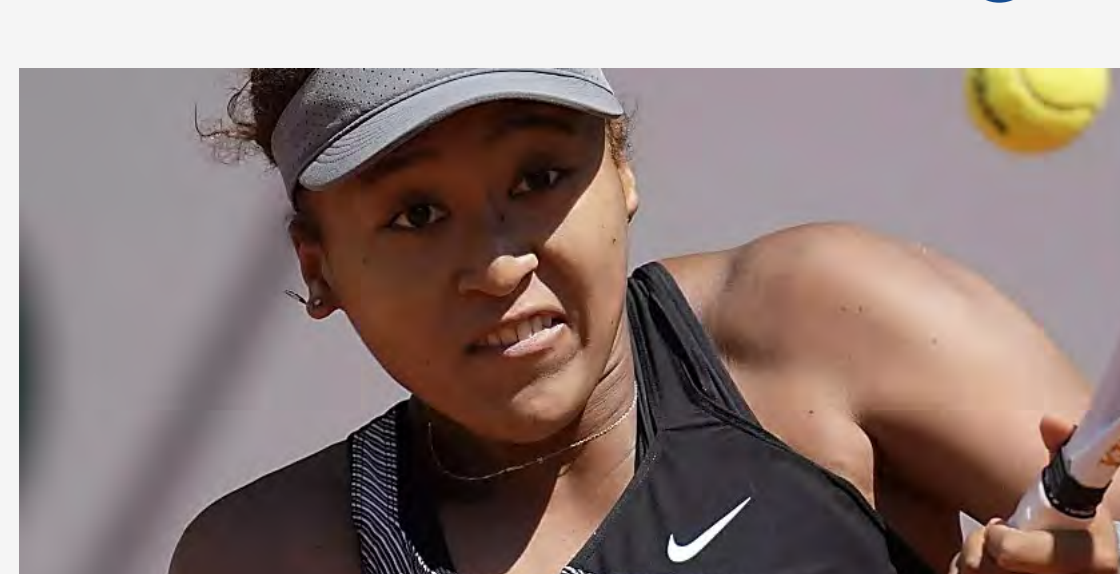


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AP May 31, 2021

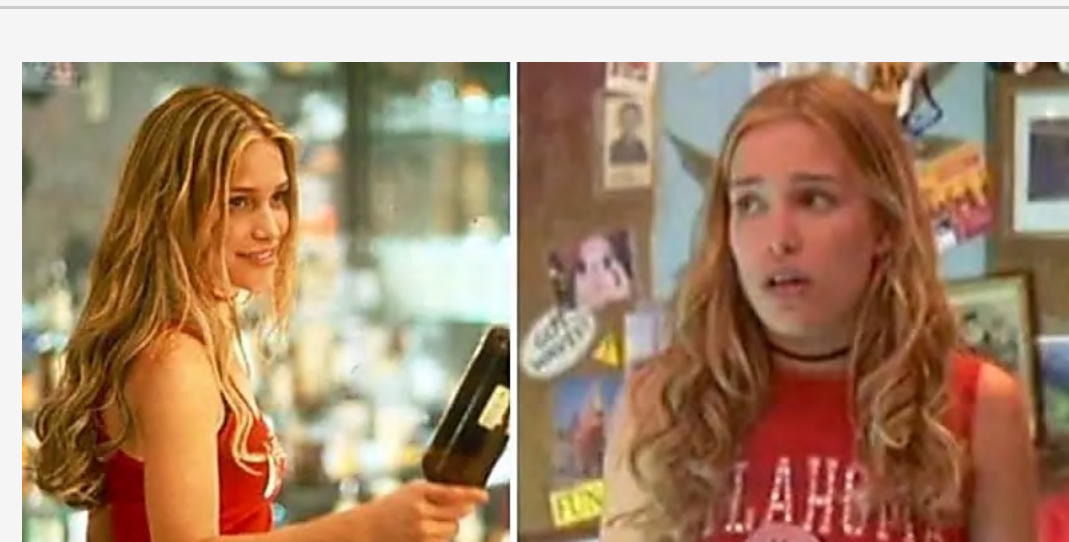


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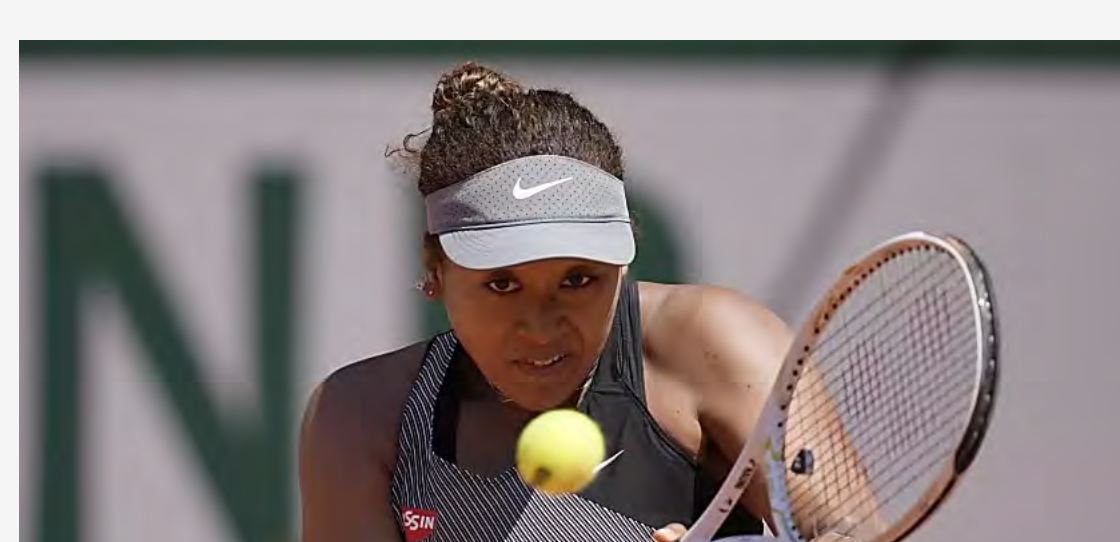
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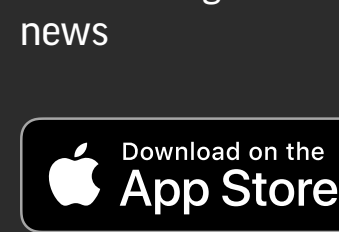
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Exhibit D

Politics

For Mid-Term Mark, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot Says She'll Only Talk To Reporters Of Color

Lightfoot said she was limiting anniversary interviews to journalists of color to highlight ongoing racial disparity in newsrooms, particularly in City Hall coverage.

By [Becky Vevea](#)
May 19, 1:28 p.m. CT



Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot speaks at a press conference on Feb. 4, 2021. This week, Lightfoot said she will only be granting interview for her two-year anniversary in office to journalists of color. Manuel Martinez / WBEZ

On the two-year anniversary of her inauguration, as her record of accomplishments and failures comes under heightened scrutiny, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot took newsrooms to task for their lack of diversity, her latest complaint about the city's media coverage.

In tweets and in a letter to City Hall reporters, Lightfoot said she would be "exclusively providing one-on-one interviews with journalists of color" to mark the end of two years as mayor. She said she was doing so to highlight long-standing disparity in the racial representation of newsrooms.

"I have been struck since my first day on the campaign trail back in 2018 by the overwhelming whiteness and maleness of Chicago media outlets, editorial boards, the political press corps, and yes, the City Hall press corps specifically," she wrote.

The two-page letter came after NBC5 political reporter Mary Ann Ahern tweeted late in the day Tuesday about the mayor's decision to grant exclusive interviews.

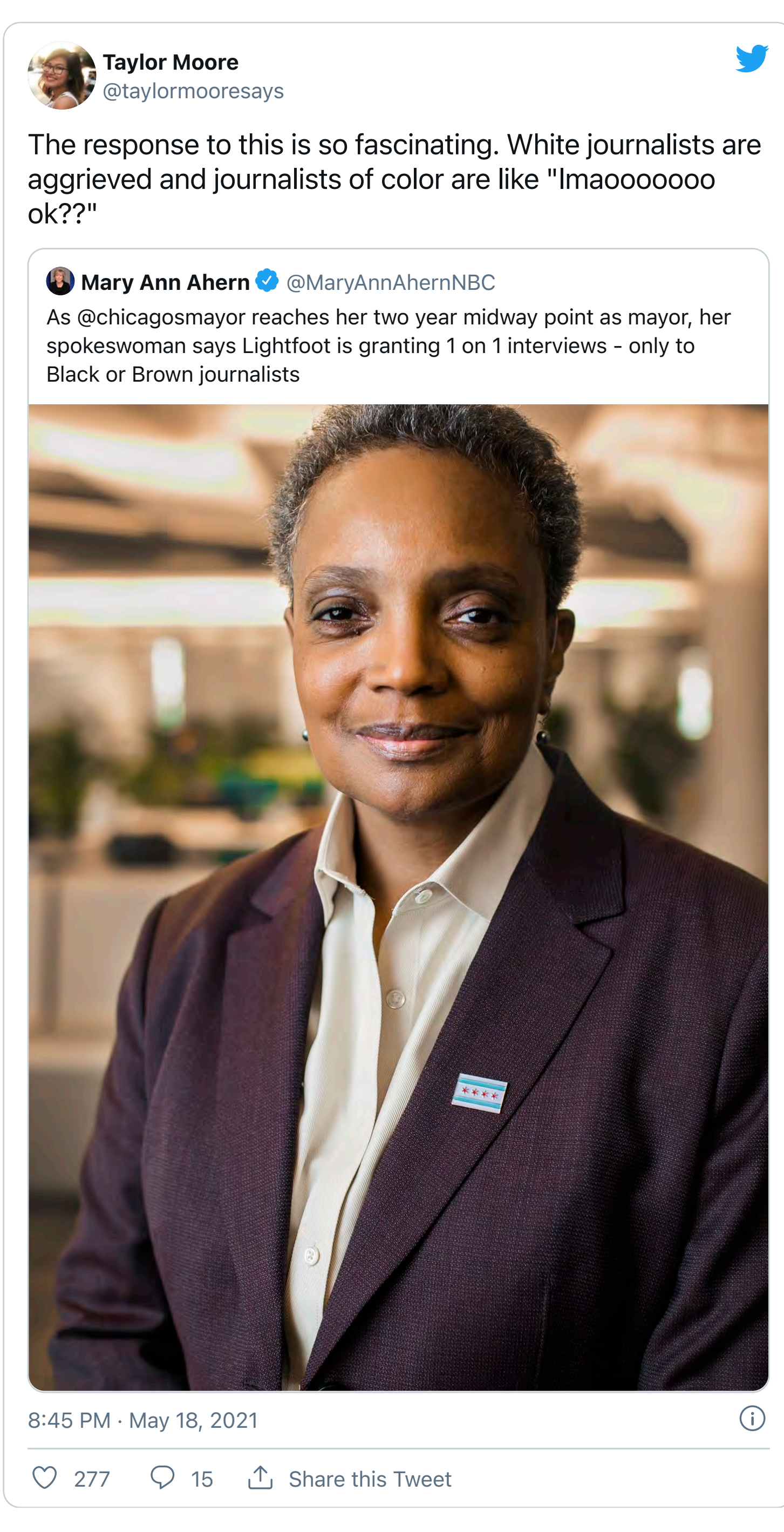


Ahern's tweet now has thousands of retweets, shares and replies, ranging from outrage to applause.

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Taylor Moore, a freelance journalist and board member of the local chapter of the Asian American Journalists Association, noted on Twitter the range of responses.



"My initial response was, 'What is the big deal?'" said Maudlyne Ihejirika, a reporter and columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and president of the local chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. She said Lightfoot hit "a sore spot" with the media.

"This comes a year, almost to the day, of George Floyd's murder when America must confront that reparative measures must be undertaken to address the systemic racism that plagues our society," Ihejirika said. "If a mayor of the third-largest city wants to step up at this time in history and say, 'Here is my effort. Here was my reparative measure to address the media sector.' What is the big deal? I say kudos."

Gregory Pratt, a city politics reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and one of few journalists of color in the City Hall press corps, said he had reached out to the mayor's office a couple weeks ago to set up a one-on-one interview with Lightfoot to mark two years in office.

Pratt, the son of an immigrant from Mexico, said on Wednesday he didn't know about the mayor's decision to exclusively offer interviews to journalists of color until he saw Ahern's tweet late Tuesday. He requested the mayor reconsider and grant interviews to all beat reporters and said when her spokesperson declined, Pratt canceled his own interview.

"I can understand the sentiment, and I really can, that the press corps needs diversification, but I also don't think it's right to abruptly do that to the beat reporters," Pratt said. "It's not the right way to make change in the institutions by insisting that again very abruptly, that only certain people get to do these interviews."



Of course, politicians routinely pick and choose who they grant interviews to. In fact, former Mayor Rahm Emanuel [did this too](#). He cut off access to NBC5 after they reported on the details of his inauguration and later, he famously [walked out of an interview with Ahern](#) when she asked where he would send his children to school.

"It is true that they don't have to agree to talk to anybody at any time," Pratt acknowledged. "There are politicians that refuse to give interviews at all. [Former House Speaker] Michael Madigan was famous for his silence. But that doesn't serve the public."

Lightfoot's relationship with local journalists has been tenuous throughout the last year or so. She [slammed WBEZ for accurately reporting](#) on her hand-picked Police Superintendent David Brown's plan to [sweep drug corners before the Fourth of July weekend](#). And more recently, leaked emails showed she [canceled her subscription to the Chicago Tribune](#) over what she saw as negative coverage.

But it's not just journalists. As [WBEZ reported in March](#), Lightfoot has gone toe-to-toe with others, including the [Chicago Teachers Union](#), Illinois Gov. [JB Pritzker](#) and both veteran and [rookie aldermen](#).

The past two years have come with significant challenges for the mayor, including a [global pandemic](#). Lightfoot's progress on many of her campaign goals has been stymied or delayed by the realities of [governing through such a tumultuous time](#). Anniversary stories written by reporters who cover her day-in and day-out tend to highlight these kinds of successes and failures.

But at the end of her letter, Lightfoot wrote that she often hears from Black and Latino community leaders about implicit bias in local news coverage.

"It is too heavy a burden to bear, on top of all the other massive challenges our city faces in this moment, to also have to take on the labor of educating white, mostly male members of the news media about the perils and complexities of implicit bias," she wrote. "So here I am, like so many other black women before me, having to call your attention to this problem."

There are smaller news outlets who cover Lightfoot but don't often get one-on-one access to her, such as [The Chicago Defender](#), a long-standing newspaper based in Bronzeville that recently switched to a digital-only publication, and [The Tribe](#), an online publication focused on Black communities and experience in Chicago.

"These outlets, typically, let's be honest, are at the end of the line in being granted access at other times of the year," Ihejirika said. "It's just the way it's always been, because politicians want the huge media hits."

Ihejirika said more journalists of color should be granted access all year round.

"Mayor Lightfoot has many deficiencies that she is going to have to answer for in her administration in her first two years, including many that impact the communities of color, who had been filled with such hope when she was elected the first African American woman to run this town," Ihejirika said. "She will have to answer for those, whether we spend the next month debating her giving POC journalists access, or whether we don't."

Lightfoot goes on to issue a challenge to local media outlets: Hire reporters of color — and especially women of color — to cover Chicago politics. She claimed in the email that zero female journalists of color were covering city hall.

Two of the three WBEZ reporters covering City Hall are Hispanic and South Asian women respectively.

Becky Vevea covers city hall for WBEZ. Follow her @beckyvevea.

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Exhibit E

Mayor Lori Lightfoot chooses only reporters of color for interviews ahead of 2-year-anniversary, sparking debate over media diversity and access

[Alice Yin](#)

Chicago Tribune

May 19, 2021 at 6:53 PM

Mayor Lori Lightfoot on Wednesday defended her decision to grant interviews on her two-year anniversary in office only to journalists of color, saying it was intended as an effort to confront the issue of what she described as a mostly white and male City Hall press corps.

But the move, revealed Tuesday by her office, was greeted skeptically by some in the Chicago media and beyond, with questions about whether excluding white reporters is a discriminatory act from a mayor who has had an often contentious relationship with reporters of all backgrounds.

Lightfoot emailed a two-page letter to Chicago journalists on Wednesday saying her choice was a continuation of her campaign's promise to "break up the status quo."

"I have been struck since my first day on the campaign trail back in 2018 by the overwhelming whiteness and maleness of Chicago media

outlets, editorial boards, the political press corps, and yes, the City Hall press corps specifically," Lightfoot wrote.

She wrote that there are no women of color assigned to the City Hall beat, saying, "I find this unacceptable and I hope you do too."

WBEZ [disputed](#) the mayor's observation in a Wednesday story, noting that two of its three City Hall reporters are women, one Hispanic and the other South Asian.

Interviews to mark Lightfoot's two years in office were set for this week and come as she faces mounting problems over crime, policing, turnover in her office and ongoing battles with the Chicago Teachers Union.

The Tribune declined to participate in an interview with Lightfoot to object to the restrictions.

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Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot speaks during a news conference at Walter Payton College Preparatory High School in Chicago on April 19, 2021. (Erin Hooley / Chicago Tribune)

Charles Whitaker, dean at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, said journalists of color trying to break into the political press corps have faced barriers for decades. But while he

applauded Lightfoot's motivation, he said the one-time interview restrictions felt more like a "stunt" and don't address the root of an age-old problem.

"I don't necessarily know that it is the best way," Whitaker said in a phone interview. "We would never, ever in a million years allow that of a white politician. And so it's dangerous now to say we are going to allow that of a Black politician simply to make a point about the historic inequities in media."

The board of the National Association of Black Journalists agreed with the call for newsrooms to diversify their City Hall press corps ranks — but said it cannot support the mayor's method of achieving that.

"NABJ's history of advocacy does not support excluding any bona fide journalists from one-on-one interviews with newsmakers, even if it is for one day and in support of activism," the board wrote in an online [statement](#) Wednesday night.

Tiffany Walden, editor-in-chief of the digital media outlet The Triibe, which covers Chicago's Black communities, defended Lightfoot's action, saying it was a small step toward leveling the playing field after what she described as a long-standing lack of access for Black and Latino journalists.

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"A lot of people are outraged by this, but just imagine what it's like for Black and brown journalists in the city to not ever have this access," Walden said. "This is literally a daily struggle for Black and brown journalists in Chicago, and I wish that was the conversation instead of

people who have access to the mayor every single day complaining about one day that they don't have access."

Walden challenged Lightfoot to uphold her promise for supporting diversity in media by prioritizing access for Black and Latino-run media outlets just as much as for legacy media. She said her outlet has struggled to get timely responses from the Lightfoot administration and been excluded from press calls. Wednesday's interview was the first one-on-one meeting with the mayor for a Triibe staffer, she said.

The editor-in-chief of South Side Weekly, Jacqueline Serrato, tweeted Wednesday afternoon that her outlet did not get Lightfoot's letter to media and later said the paper had not been granted an interview with the mayor despite requests to her office from two women of color on the staff.

Whitaker said it's nothing new for politicians to give priority to certain media outlets. He said when he worked at Ebony magazine, the influential Black publication, it was easier to get access to top officials in Washington than to former Mayor Harold Washington, Chicago's first Black mayor. Whitaker eventually got a one-on-one interview with Washington for a profile in 1987, the year of his death.

"I absolutely felt ... Harold Washington's press corps at that time was favoring local legacy media over a national Black publication," Whitaker said. "If the mayor (Lightfoot) really wants to effect access, she can make sure that many of those smaller outlets that are owned and operated by publishers and publishing houses of color have equal access to her."

Joie Chen, a senior adviser for the Poynter Institute for Media Studies,

said that the question isn't whether Lightfoot's decision to selectively choose reporters is a new phenomenon — it is not — but whether it serves the public and democracy.

"No matter their race, I think reporters will continue to ask the tough questions," said Chen, a former member of the Washington press corps. "That's what they should do, and I think that's what they will do. And I don't think anything in the mayor's decision will affect that."

ayin@chicagotribune.com

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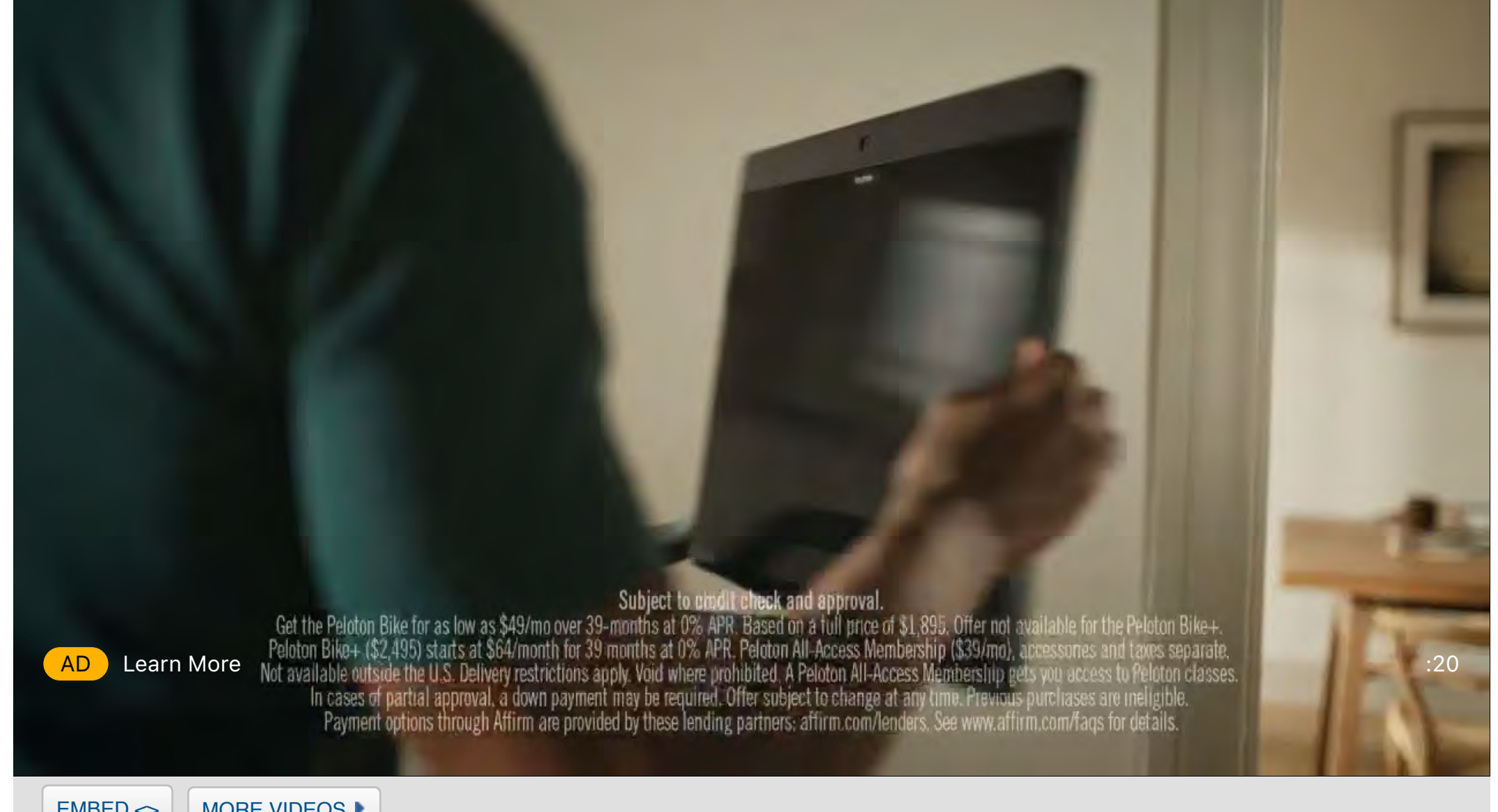
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LORI LIGHTFOOT
Mayor Lightfoot only granting interviews to reporters of color ahead of 2nd anniversary

Lightfoot blasts 'overwhelming whiteness and maleness' of Chicago media outlets

By Craig Wall
 Wednesday, May 19, 2021



Mayor Lori Lightfoot said she has been struck by the "overwhelming whiteness and maleness" of Chicago media outlets from the board room to the press room.

CHICAGO (WLS) -- On the eve of her second anniversary as Chicago mayor, Mayor Lori Lightfoot seized the opportunity to raise the issue of diversity by only giving interviews to reporters of color.

Lightfoot has made equity and inclusion a major focus of her first two years in office. And in deciding to take aim at the media, she said she has been struck by the "overwhelming whiteness and maleness" of Chicago media outlets from the board room to the press room.

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In a **two-page letter to members of the media**, she wrote: "It is impossible for this glaring lack of diversity not to be reflected in the daily coverage of government, politics and city life every single day."

"She makes a really great case about diversity and the lack of diversity, but she doesn't make the case about what's wrong with the way she's being covered," ABC7 Political Analyst Laura Washington said. "What she says implies that she's being covered unfairly, there's implicitly or explicitly bias, but she never makes the case for how that plays out in the media."

Northwestern University Journalism Professor Ava Greenwell has written a book about the diversity issues in newsrooms, which go back decades. She supports the mayor's desire to draw attention to the issue.

"When we're looking at the Black Lives Matter movement and inequity and all these other places, the news media has no choice but also to look at itself in this situation and see if it doing the best job it can to actually fostering equity across the board," Greenwell said.

But former ABC7 Political Reporter Charles Thomas, who covered City Hall for nearly 10 years, sees the mayor's move as an attempt to distract from other more important issues.

"Is the crisis diversity, or is the crisis crime?" Thomas said. "I would suggest to you that a bigger crisis is crime. A bigger crisis is city finances. A big crisis is public education in a city where the schools and public schools have been closed for a year and a semester." The mayor also issued a challenge to newsrooms to hire more reporters of color to cover City Hall.

The President of the Chicago Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists sees the letter as no big deal, because diversity in newsrooms is something they've been fighting for years.

"Yes, it's a great public relations move at her two year mark," NABJ Chicago President Maudlyne Hejirika said. "But, it will not, it will not mean Mayor Lightfoot does not have to answer for her deficiencies, her weaknesses as well as her accomplishments over these past two years."

In a statement, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists said while it is important to address newsroom inequalities, "NAHJ does not condone restricting press access based on a journalist's race/ethnicity. Any action that threatens the cornerstone of our democracy and First Amendment rights is unacceptable."

There are also some who see this as an attempt by the mayor to curry favor with the Black and Brown communities, where her support may be soft.

ABC 7's Evelyn Holmes interviewed Mayor Lori Lightfoot Wednesday on a wide range of serious issues facing our city. ABC 7 is committed to holding all of our elected officials accountable, no matter who is invited to ask the questions. Her interview will air in our newscasts on Thursday.

Full statement from National Association of Hispanic Journalists:

While it's important to address long-standing newsroom inequalities, and it is imperative that leaders in power help hold news organizations accountable, NAHJ does not condone restricting press access based on a journalist's race/ethnicity. Any action that threatens the cornerstone of our democracy and First Amendment rights is unacceptable. We must take more effective steps to achieve lasting equity in newsrooms and news coverage.

Full statement from National Association of Black Journalists

The recent comments issued by Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot to explain her decision to only do one-on-one interviews with Black and Brown reporters on the two-year anniversary of her inauguration is a bold move. It appears to serve to underscore her desire to draw attention to the racial disparities in local newsrooms and political coverage. The mayor notes that she is disturbed about the overwhelming white Chicago press corps covering city hall. While her social media posts and subsequent letter have been eyebrow-raising to some, it shines a needed spotlight on the call for a greater commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion across the media industry.

Although we cannot support the tactic, we applaud the mayor's sensitivity to the lack of diversity among the people who cover city government. Historically, America's elite political units have been led by predominantly white reporters and managers. Too often Black journalists are not given the opportunity to join political teams.

While the mayor has every right to decide how her press efforts will be handled on her anniversary, we must state again, for the record, that NABJ's history of advocacy does not support excluding any bona fide journalists from one-on-one interviews with newsmakers, even if it is for one day and in support of activism. We have members from all races and backgrounds, and diversity, equity and inclusion must be universal. However, the mayor is right in pointing to the fact that Black and Brown journalists have been quietly excluded from a number of access points over the years. We know first hand it is painful and unhealthy for our communities.

NABJ is also gravely concerned to see that a city with such a diverse population has no fair representation of communities of color in its local press corps.

This local issue is reflective of what is happening around the country and we continue to work to change the status quo. We have been successful in a number of areas to dramatically improve access and promotions for Black journalists, especially during the awakening and racial reckoning stemming from George Floyd's death.

The mayor's deputy communications director stated on Twitter, "Chicago's Mayor picked one day out of 365 to exclusively provide one-on-one interviews with journalists of color ahead of her two-year anniversary. That shouldn't be controversial. The lack of diversity in the media is."

We call on all media outlets to further improve Black and Brown representation within their newsrooms now. There should be no further delay in making swift and effective changes.

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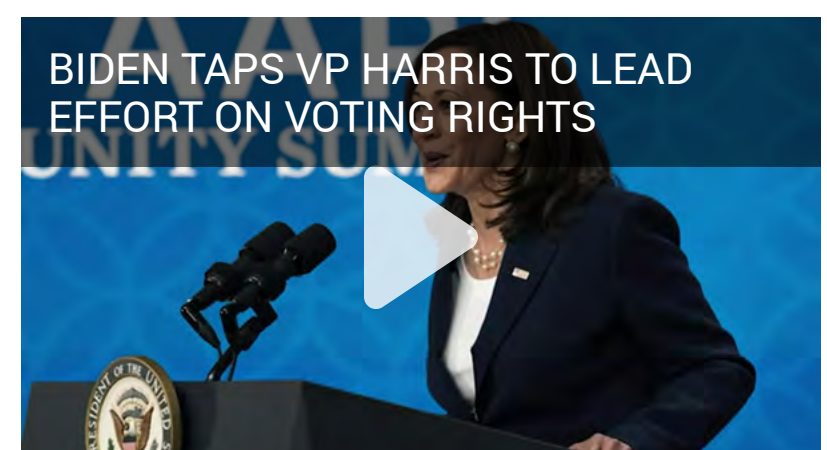
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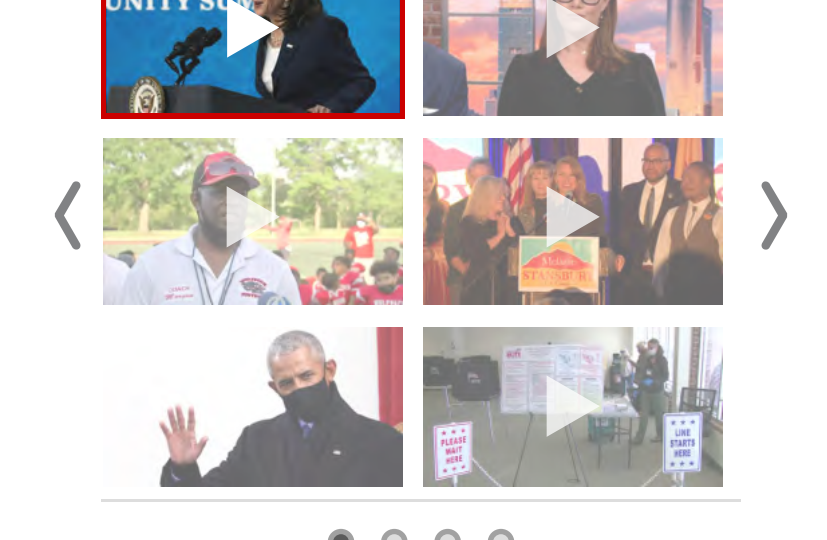
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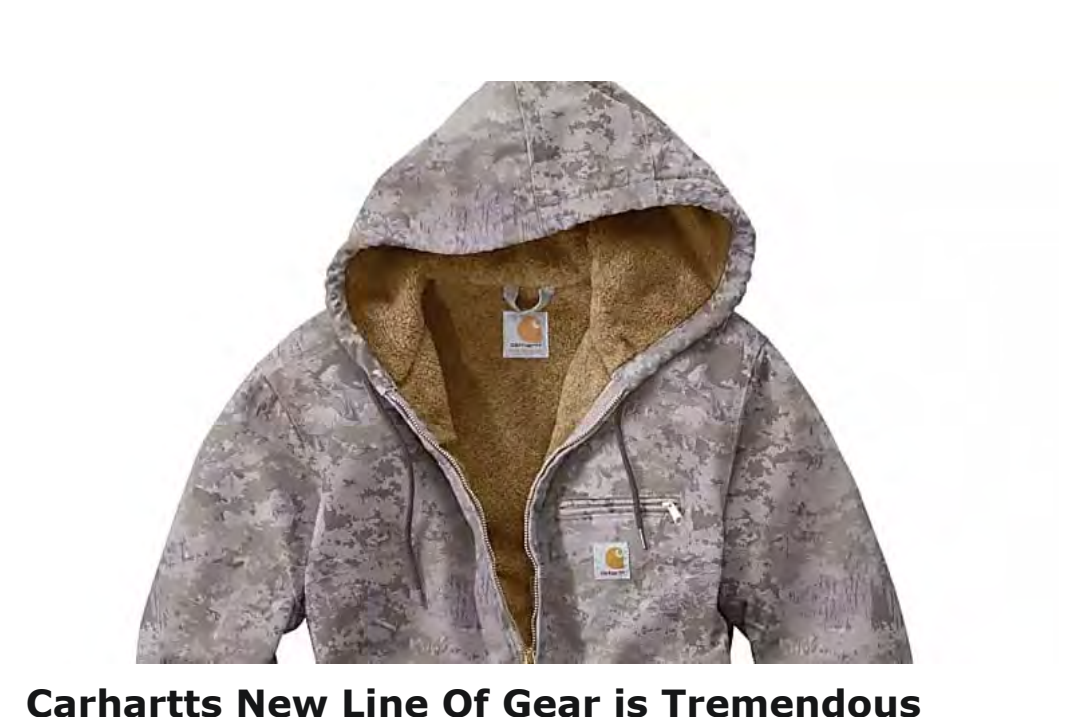
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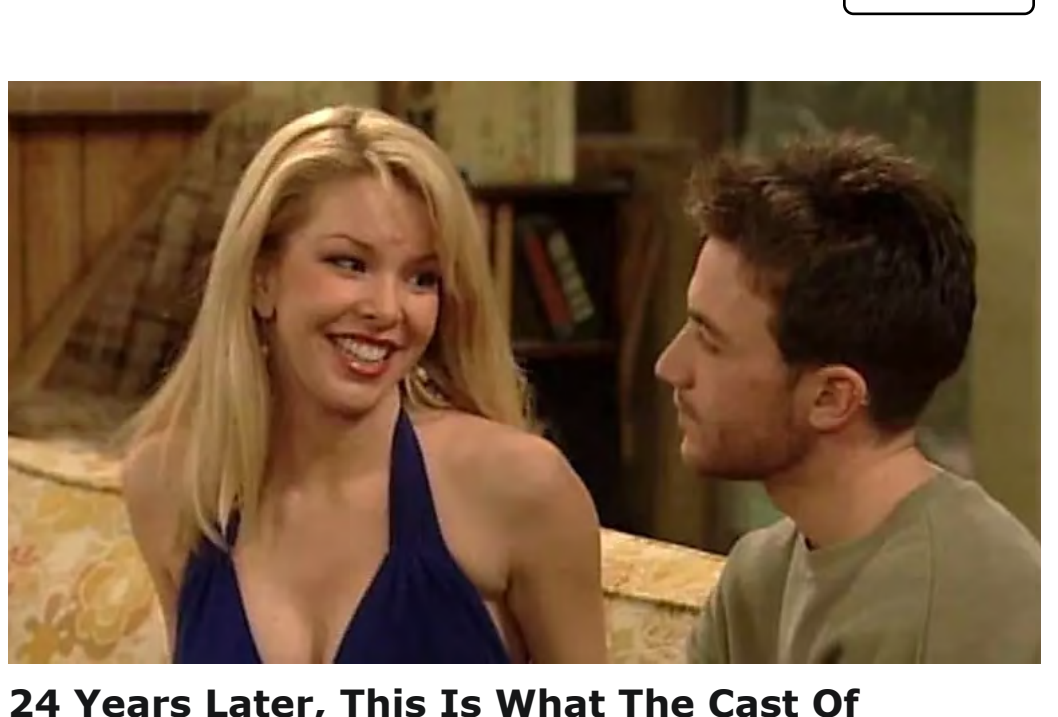
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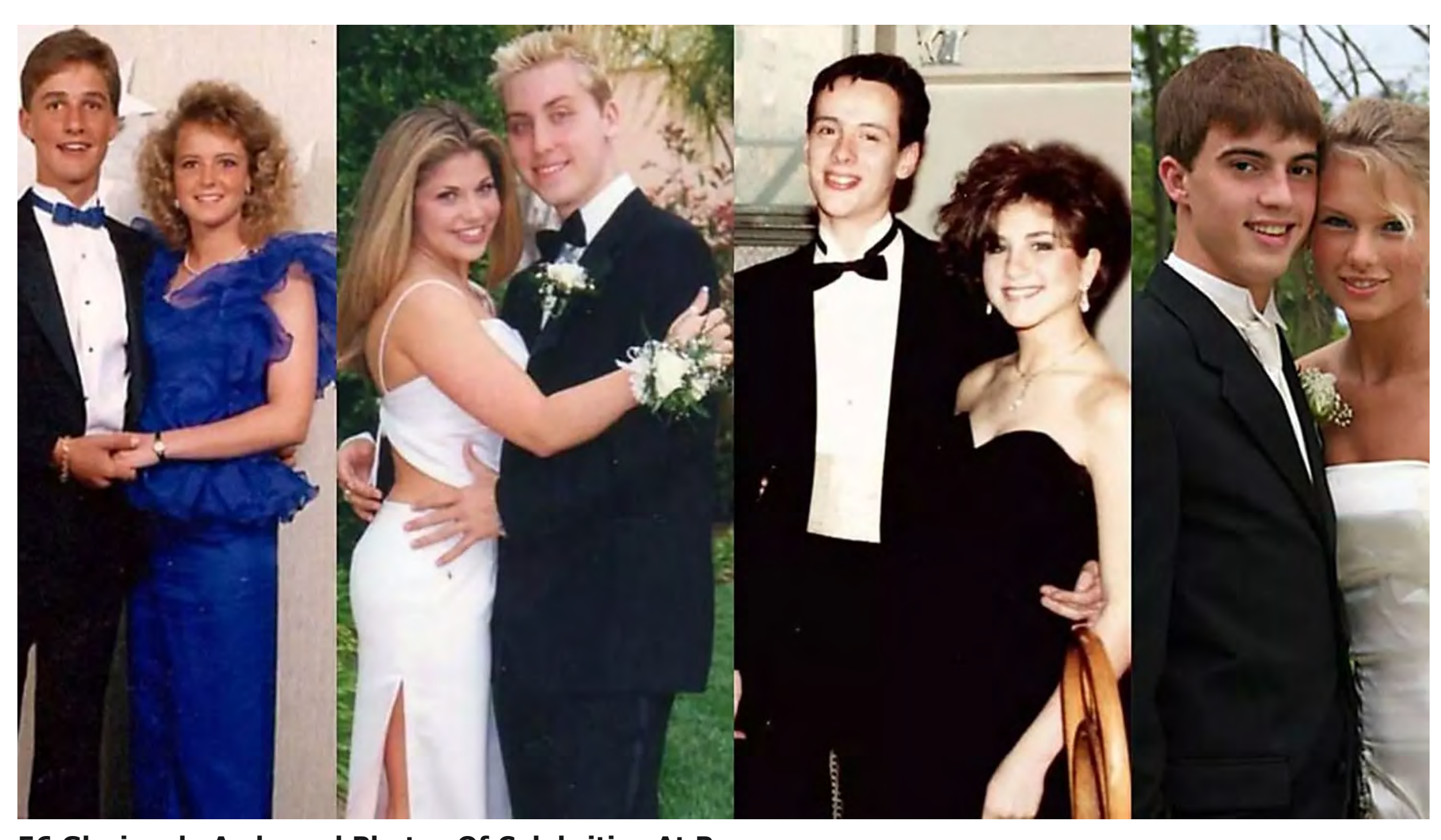
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FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION**

THOMAS CATENACCI, <i>et al.</i> ,)	
)	
Plaintiffs,)	
)	Case Number: 21-cv-02852
v.)	
)	
LORI LIGHTFOOT, in Her Official Capacity)	
As Mayor of the City of Chicago,)	
)	
Defendant.)	
_____)	

Declaration of Thomas Catenacci

I, Thomas Catenacci, hereby solemnly affirm:

1. I am over 18 years of age, competent to testify, and have personal knowledge of the facts set forth herein.
2. I am one of the plaintiffs in the above-captioned lawsuit.
3. I am White.
4. I am a national reporter for the Daily Caller News Foundation, assigned to cover labor issues, the U.S. economy, and American politics,
5. DCNF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization providing original investigative reporting from a team of professional reporters that operates for the public benefit. DCNF's website reaches approximately three million unique monthly visitors and its content, which is available without charge to any eligible news publisher, is published by The Daily Caller, Yahoo News, Business Insider and a growing host of other media outlets, reaching a combined audience estimated in excess of 30 million readers.

6. Like most news organizations, DNCF has regularly covered issues related to the pandemic, including how major cities across the country handled the pandemic as well as the pandemic's impact on those cities' economies.

7. I have published dozens of articles on issues related to the pandemic, including how major cities across the country handled the pandemic as well as the pandemic's impact on the U.S. economy.

8. To accurately report the news, I request interviews, statements, and answers to written questions from government officials and their offices.

9. As part of this ongoing coverage of the pandemic, on May 20, 2021, I requested, by email, a one-on-one interview with Mayor Lightfoot. Specifically, I asked to interview Mayor Lightfoot about how her administration plans to encourage more residents to receive the coronavirus vaccine, considering that less than 50% of the city's residents have been administered a single dose; why she believes Chicago is behind other major cities in their vaccination efforts; how her administration has handled the pandemic compared to other major U.S. cities; and how she plans to encourage residents to eat and shop locally as Chicago's vaccinated population grows.

10. My email contained a link to my Twitter account, which includes my picture.

11. I sent follow-up emails on May 21, 2021 and May 24, 2021.

12. As of June 1, 2021, Mayor Lightfoot's office has not responded to my interview request. Nor has Mayor Lightfoot agreed to or sat for an interview with me.

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I solemnly affirm under the penalties of perjury and upon personal knowledge that the contents of the foregoing paper are true

Dated: June 2, 2021

/s/ Thomas Catenacci
Thomas Catenacci

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION**

THOMAS CATENACCI, <i>et al.</i> ,)	
)	
Plaintiffs,)	
)	Case Number: 21-cv-02852
v.)	
)	
LORI LIGHTFOOT, in Her Official Capacity)	
As Mayor of the City of Chicago,)	
)	
Defendant.)	
_____)	

[Proposed] Order

Upon consideration of Plaintiffs’ Opposed Motion for Preliminary Injunction and the entire record herein, it is hereby ORDERED that:

1. The motion is GRANTED.

SO ORDERED.

Dated:

The Hon. John Z. Lee