



Chicago Mayor Apologizes Amid Demands for Resignation

In the wake of the recent release of the dashcam video showing the police shooting of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald in Chicago last year, protesters are demanding the resignations of Mayor Rahm Emanuel (shown on left) and Cook County prosecutor Anita Alvarez. Last week, the mayor fired Police Chief Garry McCarthy only days after saying Chicago's top cop had his support.

After the [release of the video](#), which showed Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke shooting Laquan McDonald 16 times — the last 14 after he was lying in the street — [protesters took to the streets](#) demanding that Chief McCarthy resign or be fired. At a press conference, McCarthy spoke to the demands for his resignation, saying, "[The mayor has made it very clear that he has my back.](#)" Within days, the mayor's support [predictably disappeared](#) and McCarthy was fired.

As *The New American* reported then:

Only days after he told reporters that he had Mayor Rahm Emanuel's full support, Chicago police chief Garry McCarthy has been fired by the mayor. Emanuel announced the dismissal of McCarthy at a Tuesday morning press conference, saying that McCarthy was "only as effective as the trust in him," adding, "Now is the time for fresh eyes and leadership."

The move to fire McCarthy was obviously a politically motivated maneuver in a city — like too many cities in America — where [race and politics too often become the main points in everything](#). Many Chicagoans appear to have seen right through Emanuel's ploy, though, and began calling for his resignation as well. As this writer previously reported:

Mariame Kaba is the director of Project NIA — a youth outreach organization in Chicago. She is also an active member of We Charge Genocide — an organization that focuses on issues of police violence against blacks in Chicago. She has called for Emanuel's resignation, saying the city has lost confidence in him and his leadership.

One day after firing McCarthy, Emanuel dismissed any idea that he would resign. In a less-than-friendly interview with *Politico*, the beleaguered mayor said, "We have a process; it's called the election," adding, "The voters spoke. I'll be held accountable and responsible for my actions and decisions I make, and that's how I approach it." Emanuel may feel that he has some degree of security — having been elected twice to his current office — but he may not have the security he believes he has.

A recent poll conducted by the *Illinois Observer* showed his job approval rating at a meager 18 percent.



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on December 11, 2015

Even more damning, 51 percent of those polled say the mayor should resign, and 64 percent believe he was lying when he said he had not seen the dashcam video of the shooting before it was made public. His statement that McCarthy was “only as effective as the trust in him” seems apropos. That knife cuts both ways. Two-thirds of Emanuel’s constituents do not trust him.

On Wednesday, Mayor Emanuel addressed the city council and offered an emotional apology. Speaking of the problems highlighted by the protests that have continued since the video was released, the mayor said, “I own it,” adding that it happened on “my watch.” The former Obama chief of staff added, “If we’re also going to begin the healing process, the first step in that journey is my step,” he said. “And I’m sorry.” But many consider it too little, too late. Considering that his apology came after the poll showing his paltry support among those in the Windy City, and only after firing McCarthy and promising reform failed to put out the fire, it looks like a hollow mea culpa. And it looks as if it didn’t work.

Hours after the mayor’s speech, hundreds of Chicagoans left their jobs and schools as part of a city-wide “walk-out” to protest in the streets, demanding that Emanuel resign. Signs and chants followed a consistent theme: “Rahm, resign!”, “Impeach Rahm!”, and “Rahm has got to go!” were common. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that one protester expressed what many have been thinking. “This is bigger than a police shooting,” the demonstrator shouted, adding, “There’s a culture of corruption that exists in Chicago.” According to the *Chicago Tribune*, one woman yelled, “This is not a black problem, this is a democracy problem. We don’t want your apology, we want your resignation!”

There were also demands from the protesters for Cook County prosecutor Anita Alvarez to resign. Alvarez waited 400 days after the shooting before charging Van Dyke with first-degree murder, even though she was in possession of the video within days of the shooting. She filed those charges hours before the video was released as the result of a court order. She claims the timing was not “politically motivated,” adding that the case is “complicated.”

It’s not just protesters in the city streets calling for Emanuel’s ouster, either. Civil rights leaders, [celebrities](#), and local politicians have added their voices to the chorus demanding he resign or be recalled. CNN published an opinion piece last week entitled [Rahm Emanuel must resign](#). Though Emanuel dismissed the idea that he could be forced to resign by saying, “We have a process; it’s called the election,” he neglected to mention that that is not the only “process.” According to [Reuters](#), “State Representative La Shawn Ford, a Chicago member of the Illinois legislature’s black caucus, filed a bill in Springfield on Wednesday to allow voters to recall Emanuel.”

In an odd show of loyalty, Hillary Clinton has chosen to “stand by her” friend. The front-runner for the Democratic nomination addressed the controversy in Chicago at campaign stop in Iowa last week. “He loves Chicago and I’m confident that he’s going to do everything he can to get to the bottom of these issues and take whatever measures are necessary to remedy them,” she said. It appears there is some likelihood the choice may not be in his hands. If Representative Ford’s bill gains the support it needs, Chicago’s voters may speak to this issue themselves. Hopefully they will make a better choice this time.



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