

Monday, February 8, 2021

The children's book *Something Happened in Our Town* is a divisive and dangerous story that is being used in elementary schools in Minnesota to make children dislike and be afraid of the police. It demonizes the police department by depicting police officers as racist and violent. This false depiction only serves to increase racial anger and hatred.

In the story, a white family is talking to their children about an incident in which a black man was shot by the police. The older sister Liz says, "The cops shot him because he was Black." The parents do not correct her and Liz adds, "Some White people still think most Black men and boys are dangerous, even though they're not."

When little Emma asks "Was the man that got shot dangerous?" the mother replies "No...Shooting him was a mistake. It was a mistake that is part of a pattern....this pattern is being nice to White people and mean to Black people. It's an unfair pattern."

In another house a father who is black says "...he won't go to jail...Cops stick up for each other...And they don't like Black men...we can't always count on them to do what's right."

When his son asks, "What if it was a White man in the car?" his father replies, "They probably wouldn't have even stopped the car." The mother adds, "Sometimes White people are treated better than Black people. But it's not right."

Stereotyping police as biased and dangerous is a dishonest message. It is unfair to our dedicated police officers and undermines the ability of law enforcement to protect us all. This puts people of all races at great risk and is a danger to the public safety of our communities.

Please take the necessary steps to stop the use of this book in our elementary classrooms.

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