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City Attorney Klein Announces Charges Filed Against Nine Involved in Gas Station Takeover

Says prosecutors will seek maximum penalties for all charges as City continues crackdown on street takeovers and chaos in Columbus neighborhoods

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced charges have been filed against nine adults stemming from a street takeover event in May 2023 where a group overran a gas station in Northeast Columbus, blocked traffic and access to the lot, and engaged in theft of merchandise from the premises.

In addition to the nine individuals charged with misdemeanor theft by City Prosecutors, 10 juveniles have been referred for prosecution within the Franklin County juvenile court system.

City Attorney Klein is instructing prosecutors handling the City's cases not to offer any plea deals and push for one hundred percent of fines and penalties for offenders.

“People are tired of the chaos and lawlessness of a small group of individuals who think the law doesn’t apply to them. This behavior harms businesses and threatens public safety and it won’t be tolerated anywhere in Columbus. That’s why, in partnership with CPD, the City is cracking down and prosecuting these cases to the fullest extent possible under the law. We want to send a message that if you engage in this lawless behavior, you’re going to eat one hundred percent of fines and penalties,” said City Attorney Zach Klein.

Last summer, the City unveiled Operation Wheels Down to crack down on the illegal, reckless operation of ATVs, motorbikes and other vehicles on city streets, leading to numerous vehicles impounded and dozens of individuals charged and prosecuted to the fullest extent.

This year, CPD’s Operation Burnout, which has focused on street takeover events, reckless driving and other related crimes, has led to hundreds of citations, dozens of arrests and more than 100 vehicles impounded as part of the operation.

“I would like to thank our community partners who provided information leading to the identification of the people involved in these crimes. Additionally, Columbus Police Detectives worked collaboratively with the community and the City Attorney’s Office to

appropriately charge those involved in these criminal acts. Taking over streets, victimizing businesses and endangering the people of Columbus is unacceptable. We appreciate the support of City Attorney Zach Klein and his entire staff for their thorough prosecution of these criminal cases,” said Columbus Division of Police Assistant Chief Greg Bodker.

The City noted that if any other evidence from this incident is brought to light, further charges could be filed to hold the identified individuals accountable for additional offenses.

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