



Lightfoot Links Rise in Chicago Carjackings to COVID-induced Remote Learning

On Monday, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot tied a massive increase in carjackings in the city to the shutdown of local schools due to the Chinese virus, also known as COVID-19. As the far-left Windy City mayor made the connection between the increase in violent carjackings and students not being in a traditional school setting for months on end, she drew the ire of the city's far-left teachers union.

During a news conference touting some early successes of a new specialized carjacking task force in Chicago, Lightfoot claimed that the increase in carjackings was largely due to juveniles, whom the mayor said had created an atmosphere of "pervasive fear" among the city's residents. Lightfoot then drew a direct correlation between the uptick in carjackings and youths who weren't taking remote learning very seriously.

"Having talked to state's attorneys who were dealing with these cases in juvenile court and others, a lot of parents went to work during the day thinking their teenagers were logged on for remote learning only to find something else," Lightfoot told reporters at the city's Office of Emergency Management and Communications.

The mayor claimed that "boredom" was compelling youths to commit the violent crimes.

"For many of these kids, some of whom had no prior involvement in the criminal justice system, this was pure boredom," Lightfoot added. "But we're way past that point now, and we've gotta bend the curve on this issue."

The mayor and the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) have been at odds recently over the mayor's wish to return children to classrooms, despite a surge in COVID-19 related to the so-called omicron variant of the virus.

The CTU blasted Lightfoot, saying that the mayor needed to apologize to the students of her city.

"Every child in our public schools in Chicago deserves an apology from the mayor today, who claimed with zero evidence that there was a correlation between remote learning in 2020 and an increase in carjackings, which have been growing across the nation," said a CTU [press release](#) Monday.

The CTU accused the black Lightfoot of racism, while defending the children of the city's schools. "To suggest that our students are somehow disproportionately responsible for these crimes is precisely the



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Written by [James Murphy](#) on February 9, 2022

kind of scapegoating and smear tactics Black and Brown students and adults have had to contend with in any discourse about crime for generations.”

As “proof” of their claim that Lightfoot had no evidence for her claim, the CTU cited an opinion piece written by Maya Dukmasova in April of 2021, which called accusations that youth were responsible for the upsurge in carjackings “a narrative built on shoddy data and anecdotal evidence.”

Chicago Alderman Raymond Lopez also called Lightfoot to account for seemingly blaming the students for the uptick in carjackings: “She’s grasping at straws,” Lopez said. “In her latest attempt, she’s trying to lay blame on the 300,000 students who are participating in CPS’s remote learning from a year ago.”

Unfortunately for the CTU and Lopez, in this case, Lightfoot does indeed have actual evidence of an increase in carjackings, as well as evidence that the increase is being fed by juvenile actors.

CBS Chicago shared data showing that there were just 603 carjackings in 2019. Those numbers rose to 1,413 in 2020 and 1,850 last year.

Chicago Police Superintendent David Brown pointed to the case of an [11-year-old](#) boy who was alleged to have carjacked a vehicle in the Mt. Greenwood neighborhood of the city. Brown called the incident “a sad state of affairs,” and further said that the same youth may have been responsible for several other city carjackings.

“Unfortunately, this 11-year-old has been arrested before and he is considered a prolific carjacker in our city,” Brown said.

Last January, at least [four teens](#) — including two 14-year-old girls — were also arrested on multiple carjacking charges in the city.

The discussion in Chicago about who or what is to blame for the increase of violent crimes in Chicago is interesting — but it’s also a moot point in many ways. While Lightfoot and the CTU argue over this, the fact remains that violence is there and the city’s residents are frightened to walk and drive in their own city.

“No resident in the city of Chicago or the Chicagoland area deserves to live in fear of violence,” Lightfoot told the gathering of reporters on Monday. Good, but what does the mayor intend to do about it? Simply making sure that students are back to in-person learning isn’t the answer — it doesn’t even address the problem.

For the situation in Chicago to improve, Lightfoot needs to unshackle her police force.



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