

# Drop the charges now! Defend student activists! Justice for the Tampa 5!

written by Struggle - La Lucha  
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On March 6, 2023, members of Tampa Bay Students for a Democratic Society held a rally on the University of South Florida campus to defend diversity in higher

education. At the rally, four women activists were suddenly and violently assaulted by USF police before being arrested. Later, on April 4, another student received a communication of the university's intent to charge her with additional misdemeanors and a felony - just like the other 4 activists.

The Tampa 5 - Chrisley Carpio, Gia Davila, Lauren Pineiro, Laura Rodriguez, and Jeanie K. deserve our support. They disrupted no campus activities, damaged no property, and did nothing wrong. Several video recordings of the event show the aggressive and unprovoked way that USF police grabbed these young women, slammed them into walls, groped them inappropriately, and placed them in chokeholds. Video captured at the event has already amassed over 6 million views on TikTok, and can be viewed [here](#).

In addition to alleged code of conduct violations and misdemeanor charges, the Tampa 5 are facing felony charges. Once again, the police are lying about what happened, despite video evidence clearly showing the police going on an unprovoked rampage. Several of the activists lost their jobs after these unjust arrests. Chrisley Carpio is a union member (AFSCME Local 3342) and is still fighting to save her job at the University despite having a spotless record.

The administration at the University of South Florida want to intimidate students and youth who exercise their freedom of speech. The activists held the original rally on March 6 to protect higher education from Governor Ron DeSantis's attacks on diversity, equality, inclusion (DEI) and multicultural programs. There is absolutely no evidence that the Tampa 5 or any of the activists did anything to provoke the outrageous response from campus police. The hearings concerning the expulsion of student activists who were violently attacked must be stopped and the code of conduct charges against them dropped.

We support these brave women and demand that the charges against the Tampa 5 be dropped immediately. We stand in solidarity with the Tampa 5 and show our

unwavering commitment to defending all who stand for peace, higher learning, and diversity.

**Drop the charges now! Bring Chrisley back to work!**

**Defend diversity in higher education! Activism is not a crime!**

## **Organizational Endorsements**

- Freedom Road Socialist Organization
- Students for a Democratic Society, Cal Poly Humboldt, CA
- Tallahassee Community Action Committee, FL
- Panhandle Progressive Coalition, FL
- Tom Wells for Congress District 3, FL
- Young Democratic Socialists of America, Loyola University, NO
- Students for a Democratic Society, University of Illinois Chicago
- Milwaukee Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression
- Tampa Bay Community Action Committee
- Progressive Student Union at University of Washington, Seattle
- Reconstruction Committee, Chicago, IL

## **Action Items**

1. Sign onto this statement (at <https://peoplespetitions.org/tampa5>) as an individual and share widely.
2. Raise this statement within your organization (community organization, labor union, activist group, etc.), and go through whatever process your organization uses to endorse this statement on behalf of the organization. Use the second form (red) above for organizational endorsements.

3. Call the university president and demand they drop the charges on the Tampa 5: [\(813\)-417-5292](tel:(813)4175292)
4. Donate to support the Tampa 5: <https://gofund.me/5765e559>
5. Follow Tampa Bay SDS on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for updates

