



My name is Frankie Jackson and I have lived in Williston for most of my life. I was an employee with the City of Williston for 32 years before retiring recently. I am writing to my community in hopes to tell my story of why I'm calling for peace and safety in Williston. Everyone knows and has heard of the event called CrabFest and my goal is to shut it down and not allow it to take place this year in our community. I don't want other people telling my story and concerns, so I felt the need to contact our Sheriff and other community leaders and get involved on the front end and call for peace and safety in Williston.

My number one concern is that we are in the middle of a pandemic with COVID-19 and I have personally lost multiple members of my family to the virus. For someone to invite thousands of people into my community with no concern for the safety of others is just wrong. It's not safe even during a normal year and it is not safe right now during a pandemic. Real lives are being lost and some people say, that's just a part of life, but I will say it can be avoided if you keep yourself and others safe and follow guidelines of wearing a mask, washing your hands and staying away from large crowds.

I have heard quite a bit of loud talk in our streets from Kenieul Gates and others that only a few community members want to stop CrabFest, but I have personally gotten over 60 signatures of residents, land owners and businesses in the immediate area CrabFest takes place. These signatures represent actual voices from the neighborhood and community affected year after year by CrabFest and they wanted to join my campaign called "Williston Wants Peace". I have also gotten over 250 people to sign on to the campaign online. Most are from Levy County, but there have been some people from neighboring counties also signing on because of the issues that occur that affect everyone. Going on FACEBOOK LIVE is not reality and its social media entertainment. My community and I live in reality and we are saying stop calling for thousands of people to come here.

I have also heard Kenieul Gates say he wants a "Williston Takeover" and he is going to have thousands more people come to Williston just to defy everyone's pleas to shut CrabFest down. Kenieul does not even live here in Williston. He lives in Gainesville. If he is such a great promoter, why not go somewhere else and hold your CrabFest. Why try and disregard an entire neighborhood, community and group of leaders asking you to not host the event in such a dangerous location at this time. If Kenieul cared anything about safety, he would actually plan it at a different location where it's better managed and more safe for people to attend. Not here. Not this year Kenieul.

I also want to address just how disrespectful Kenieul Gates is to all the community resident and leaders. Some people don't feel safe or even want to speak out in fear for what may happen, so that's why I am here to help tell everyone what's going on. Kenieul gets on social media and thinks being hateful and disrespectful is entertaining to the people that listen to him. Everyone in our community hears about it and the people I speak to says he is just foolish and is using this single event to try and make himself look like some big promoter or activist. He only cares about himself.

Also, you cannot compare CrabFest to any other events that happen in Williston. The Peanut Festival and 4th of July Celebrations are safely planned, organized, permitted and have licensed food vendors that operate under all health safety guidelines required by the state. They do not block major roadways or create public safety issues like CrabFest. These other festivals provide a safe environment, have security plans with not much need for law enforcement presence and families can go without fear of someone being hurt or worse being shot. If you want to have a safe festival, maybe you should ask the planners of these festivals how they organize and promote and call for all of the community to come together and attend.

CrabFest was started and was a small neighborhood gathering that was fun and safe. It has grown so much and is out of control and the amount of people coming here just makes it unsafe to have anymore. I don't want to see another family lay a loved one to rest like my family has had to do over this past year. I want my community to have fun and gather in a safe way, but right now is not the time and Williston and my neighborhood is not the place. Kenieul Gates does not speak for Williston and he barely has control over an out of control event.

I would ask anyone that reads this and wants CrabFest stopped, please join my campaign "Williston Wants Peace" by going online and sign the petition to have your voice heard. The petition link is below.

<https://www.jotform.com/build/210836320389052>

Thank you for caring like I do for Williston.

Sincerely,


Frankie Jackson