

Dear City Council Members,

I am testifying as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore to ask that you divest \$100M from the over-half-billion-dollar Baltimore Police Department budget and encourage the Mayor to redirect those funds to transparent and accountable community-led solutions that address the root causes of crime. In addition, I ask that you advocate for the creation of a trust that communities can dictate where and how the money is reinvested. SURJ works in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs.

I am a Towson University Alum living in Lauraville, MD. I am a childcare worker, a community advocate, a sister, a daughter, and a healer. At Towson, I studied Family and Human Services and learned that **preventative measures are more effective at serving the community and more cost effective than reactionary services**. The fact that the Baltimore Police Department, tasked with responding to crime, not preventing it, has more funding than schools, housing, violence prevention initiatives, substance abuse treatment, and parks and recreation combined, departments that reduce crime before it occurs, is extremely poor budgeting IF the goal is to heal and restore the community. Right now, it appears that the goal is to criminalize poverty and fill the jails and prisons with black and brown bodies. **I do not consent to having my tax dollars fund the destruction of Baltimore Cities black and brown communities.**

The first 13 years of my life, I survived constant domestic abuse and repeated sexual assault. Not once did I think calling the police was a good idea, and this was before I heard anything about police brutality in the media. **The police are not trained or advertised to respond to this kind of interpersonal violence.** They “fight bad guys”, so what happens when the bad guy is sometimes loving and good to you? What happens when he is the main provider? **Throwing him away is not an option, so we survive and tell no one.** There must be an alternative, and that alternative costs money! Police departments are a parasite sucking up a disproportionate amount of my taxes and leaving holistic healing programs scrambling for funding and staff. **We need a change!**

I escaped and my healing came from a private school for girls that had extra funding to pay my way. My graduating class was 30 girls, many of whom were abused like me. The school challenged me to achieve academically and I received a full ride to college. It kept me active in sports. It gave me structure and a community of girls to heal among. **Fund programs that build up the community, instead of waiting for crime to happen and then throwing our loved ones away.**

As a white woman, there is a lot of privilege in my story that brought me to a place of healing and restoration. **I demand that the opportunity to heal and restore be made available to black and brown people too. They deserve respect and the ability to live long and healthy lives. They deserve care not cops, jobs not jails, and books not bars.**

It is for these reasons that I ask you to divest \$100M from the Baltimore Police Department budget and redirect those funds to transparent and accountable community-led solutions that address the root causes of crime, including a trust that communities can dictate where and how the money is reinvested.

Additionally, as a member of SURJ Baltimore I stand in solidarity with Baltimore Safe Haven in their demands for financial support for LGBTQ folks experiencing homelessness, access to a building from the city, grant funds for trans-led orgs to provide direct services, and the creation of an LGBTQ office in city hall.

Finally, we believe that after over a million dollars spent, two mistrials, and two overturned guilty verdicts, that the relentless over-prosecution of Keith Davis Jr. has not made this city safer and only wasted precious resources that could be use saving the lives of many Baltimoreans, rather than ruining the life of one man and

his family. We ask you do everything in your power to call on Marilyn Mosby and the Baltimore State's Attorney Office to drop the charges against Keith Davis Jr. and not continue with a fifth trial.

Thank you for your time.

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