

May 27, 2021

Dear Baltimore City Council Members,

I am reaching out as a Baltimore City resident and tax payer and urging you to make important considerations related to our city budget and how citizens want their taxes used.

We know that increasing funding to the Baltimore Police Department is not making our city safer or solving crime. The BPD often causes more harm to people of color and other under-represented folx in our community. There are other resources that are better suited to supporting our communities and neighborhoods.

Here is how I would like the budget to reflect how my taxes are used:

1) Defund the Baltimore City Police Department

Cut 100 million dollars from BPD's budget. The constant growth of BPD's budget has not correlated into a decrease in crime or harm and has only fed surveillance and police violence in Black & Brown communities.

2) Create a Community Wellness Trust Fund

30 million dollars invested into reimagining public safety trust fund to be governed through a participatory budgeting process. Baltimoreans are more than capable of identifying what public safety without increased police presence or surveillance tools look like for them.

3) Invest in Black Communities

\$70 million dollars allocated to support quality, affordable housing, high-quality public education, universal healthcare, jobs, a universal basic income, and community programs.

4) Remove the police entirely from responses to mental health distress, substance use, sex work, houselessness, and other quality of life issues

Create an alternative to 911 that does not dispatch police to connect people in crisis with the mental health, housing, treatment and/or harm reduction resources they need to live with dignity.

I urge our City Council members to listen to how our communities want our tax dollars spent, as we best know what resources we need.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Colline Emmanuelle