

## **Stegman, Matthew**

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**From:** Tracie Guy-Decker <tracieguy@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 26, 2021 2:31 PM  
**To:** Testimony  
**Subject:** City Budget FY22-Public Comment for Taxpayer Night

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May 27, 2021  
Tracie Guy-Decker  
Baltimore, MD 21229

### **Testimony - FY2022 City Council Taxpayers' Night**

Honorable members of the City Council,

I'm a proud Baltimorean. I choose to live, work, worship, and educate my kid in Baltimore City. I live in the Hunting Ridge neighborhood of the 8th district.

I believe in our City and in its citizens. I think we have the grit and the resilience to be a model for the country. I want us to be the kind of community that uses radical imagination and a commitment to one another's humanity to interrupt state-sanctioned cycles of poverty and violence. Our problems are only intractable if we continue to rely on the "solutions" that simultaneously perpetuate harm.

The City budget is a moral document, and I believe this budget is not meeting the needs of residents of our city.

I am disappointed that the FY2022 Baltimore City Preliminary Budget continues a pattern of divesting and underinvesting from that which nurtures our communities, while increasing investments in policing and punishment that pile on harm and perpetuate cycles and systems that lead to negative outcomes for all of us.

As a resident and citizen of the City, I am writing to encourage you act on the demands of the activists and advocates of the coalition made up of the Campaign for Justice, Safety, & Jobs, Baltimore Renters United, and Baltimore Fair Elections coalition:

1. A \$100 million cut from BPD's existing budget. The increases to police funding in this budget are unacceptable.
2. A \$30 million investment into a community wellness trust fund to be governed through a participatory budgeting process.
3. A \$70 million additional investment to support quality, affordable housing, high-quality public education, universal healthcare, jobs, a universal basic income, and community programs.

4. Removal of police entirely from responses to mental health distress, substance use, sex work, homelessness, and other quality of life issues. Baltimore must create an alternative to 911 that does not dispatch police but connects people in crisis with the mental health, housing, treatment, and harm reduction resources they need to live with dignity.
5. \$2.5 million to fund counsel for renters facing eviction.
6. \$2.5 million to fund the new Fair Elections program.

This proposed budget *increases* BPD funding and doesn't invest in new programs designed to keep people housed and increase the political power of individual Baltimoreans. It is clear from the 2016 report from the DOJ on the BPD, from corroborating evidence from around the country, and from a street's-eye view of this city that police officers and departments are not the right response to a large number of personal and public health issues we currently force them to address. We can do better. We must do better. A budget is a moral document. I respectfully urge you to invest in supporting Black, brown, and low-income communities, not in policing them.

Thank you.

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Tracie Guy-Decker

Senior Partner, [Joyous Justice](#)

Co-host & co-creator, [Jews Talk Racial Justice with April & Tracie](#)

Writer, [bmoreincremental.com](#)