



May 26, 2021

Dear City Council President Nick Mosby and the Baltimore City Council,

We are Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity, or BARS, a collective of Asian and Pacific Islander city residents organizing for anti-racism. Formed in response to police brutality against Michael Brown and Freddie Gray in the winter of 2015, BARS brings together Asians and Pacific Islanders of all backgrounds in Baltimore to work in solidarity with our neighbors and the communities we share: Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQIA+, women, working class, disabled folks, incarcerated people, immigrants, refugees, and more. We represent a justice-oriented AAPI community, with a diverse group of people from all fields including advocates, academics, students, workers and creatives.

We are writing to join Organizing Black and many other Baltimore city groups in opposing any increase in funding to the Baltimore City Police Department (BPD). We are in support of a \$100 million cut from the BPD budget. As stated by Organizing Black, "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 and Brown communities." When BARS has been called upon to talk about addressing anti-Asian violence, we have reiterated that anti-Asian violence is not just interpersonal crime but state and systemic violence as well, as Asian and Pacific Islanders also suffer from police violence, anti-immigrant and anti-sex work policy, and community divestment.

Although we recognize the Baltimore City Council at this time cannot reallocate budget dollars, we also call for cuts to the BPD budget to be redirected to a community-centered public safety fund, along with all necessary social services, including housing, education, healthcare, and jobs. Reimagining public safety in Baltimore is not a matter of technology, training or force. Justice is not simply a matter of prosecution and punishment. Genuine improvement in public safety requires true accountability from the police, and a budget that moves towards lifting BIPOC communities out of poverty. Defunding the police and shifting our reliance on a carceral system to reliance on community and interpersonal assets are central to this and the first step towards the right direction.

We also stand with Kelly Davis and Team Free Keith and collectively urge that you call on Baltimore's State's Attorneys Office to drop the charges against Keith Davis Jr. These trials have cost taxpayers over a million dollars without being able to render an ounce of justice to the Davis family and the Jones family. From the cost of judges, witnesses, DNA analysis, police officers, court clerks, bailiffs, law clerks, utilities and operations, and juror payments - Baltimore residents are directly paying for the unjust prosecution of a police brutality victim.

As Baltimore City residents, as your neighbors, we urge that the City Council use the full extent of your powers and make these changes to the Fiscal Year 2022 budget for the needs and sake of our

Black neighbors and friends. Only in this way can we prevent violence and unnecessary Black death at the hands of law enforcement. Thank you.

For more information about Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity or this position, please contact baltimoreasianresistanceinsolidarity@gmail.com.

Thank you,
Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity