

Baltimore City Board of Estimates
Bureau of the Budget and Management Research
FY 2022 Virtual Taxpayers' Night

May 27, 2021

Dear Board of Estimates (BOE):

Nearly a year ago, amidst nationwide protests addressing the ongoing deaths of Black people at the hands of the police, Baltimore City Council passed a budget cutting \$22 million from the Baltimore Police Department (BPD). This cut was in response to the national pressure and long unheard cries of countless Baltimore residents demanding funding for vital services and infrastructure: affordable housing, quality education, Internet access, substance abuse treatment facilities, and more.

The cut did not last long, and vital services remain poorly funded. Baltimore's current proposed budget has reserved a \$28 million increase in funding for BPD. **What was the point of cutting police spending last year only for it to account for over 15% of Mayor Scott's \$3.6 billion spending plan for FY22?**

Baltimore needs investment in *people*, not police. As we see time and time again, well-funded police forces do not guarantee safety. If that were truly the case, Baltimore would be the safest city in the United States seeing **as we spend more on police per capita (nearly \$1,000 per taxpayer) than any major city in the country.**

This city is exhausted by broken promises and skewed budgets that do not represent the needs of our communities. In alignment with the demands of [Organizing Black](#), I'm urging the defunding of the BPD, the creation of a Community Wellness Trust Fund, true investment in Black Baltimore communities, and the removal of police entirely from responses to mental health distress, substance abuse, sex work, homelessness, and other quality-of-life issues.

I ask you to reflect on what justice really means for our city and our country when it comes to policing and safety. Derek Chauvin's guilty verdict was read on Tuesday, April 20th at the exact same moment Ma'Khia Bryant (16 y.o), of Columbus, OH, was shot and killed by police **after calling them for help**. This isn't working. Increased policing isn't keeping us safe. It's time to stop the needless deaths at the hands of cops and invest in services and infrastructure that are reflective of real community needs.

Thank you for your time.

Lee Domeika
Baltimore City Resident – District 43