

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.

I am speaking here today after a decade of living in Baltimore, a current resident of the Better Waverly neighborhood, and a data analyst by trade. SURJ works in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs.

In 2019, 851 people died of opioid-related deaths. In FY2022, the city is set to spend about \$1,563,356 in General Fund dollars on Substance Abuse and Mental Health. In 2019, 348 people died by homicide. In FY2022, the city is set to spend \$521,725,791 from its General Fund on the BPD. This shows the city has budgeted 816 times as much per life lost responding to homicides as it plans to spend preventing opioid-related deaths. As it stands, this budget prioritizes punishing crime over saving lives.

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.

Jonathan Smeton  
Better Waverly  
SURJ Baltimore