

Dear City Council members,

I am writing as a Baltimore city resident in Belair-Edison, within the city's 13th District. I oppose the current FY22 budget with its increase in spending for the Baltimore Police Department and decrease in spending on public schools. A year after the police killing of George Floyd, nearly five years after the attempted police killing of Keith Davis, Jr., and nearly eight years after the police killing of Tyrone West, our city continues to move in the wrong direction. We must change course now.

I fully support the demands of Organizing Black to defund BPD and invest in Black communities. Here are the demands:

Defund the Baltimore City Police Department. We demand that 100 million dollars be cut 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 and brown communities.

Create a Community Wellness trust fund. We demand a \$30 million dollar investment into reimaging 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 looks like for them.

Invest in Black communities. We demand that \$70 million dollars be allocated to support quality, affordable housing, high-quality public education, universal healthcare, jobs, a universal basic income, and community programs.

Remove police entirely from responses to mental health distress, substance use, sex work, homelessness, and other quality-of-life issues. We demand Baltimore 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 also call on Mayor Brandon Scott and all members of City Council to do all within your power to demand that the State's Attorney's Office drops all charges against Keith Davis, Jr. Our city has already spent over a million in taxpayer dollars to prosecute an innocent man rather than seek actual justice in the killing of Kevin Jones.

In June 2015, Keith Davis Jr was misidentified as a robbery suspect by four BPD officers who chased him into an enclosed garage and shot at him dozens of times. He was acquitted of the robbery after a trial in which the **robbery victim testified that Keith wasn't the person who had committed it.** The police and Marilyn Mosby's office then claimed that a gun found near Keith in that garage had been used to murder Kevin Jones several hours earlier that same day.

It was determined that:

- **The gun was never fired that day.**
- **There is no DNA link between Keith Davis Jr. and Kevin Jones.**
- **One of the officers who shot Keith was even investigated by the FBI for interstate drug trafficking.**

Despite these glaring problems with the case, Marilyn Mosby has chosen to repeatedly prosecute him. These trials have resulted in two mistrials and two overturned guilty verdicts. These trials have also cost taxpayers over a million dollars without being able to render an ounce of justice. From the cost of judges, witnesses, DNA (which was outsourced by the state), 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.

On May 13, 2021, Keith Davis Jr. was granted a new trial, making way for him to be tried **a fifth** time. Please 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.

You have the opportunity to move our city in a new direction. There is much more work to do to create a true participatory budgeting and planning process that focuses on investment and development in the Black neighborhoods that have been harmed the most by systemic racism and oppression. Supporting the demands of Organizing Black and ending the unjust prosecution of Keith Davis, Jr. are an excellent place to start.

Sincerely,

Gretchen M. Tome