

May 27, 2021
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Baltimore, Maryland 21209

Testimony -FY2022
City Council Taxpayers" Night

Honorable Members of the City Council,

My name is Dr. Gwen DuBois and I live in the Mt. Washington neighborhood in the 5th district. I was born, educated through high school in our public schools in Baltimore and moved back to raise my family here, and educate my children in the Baltimore Public School system, practice as a primary care physician and get my degree in public health here as well. Too many of my patients have lost their children to gun violence I love Baltimore and so must speak out and urge you to reduce the amount of money we are investing in policing while ignoring the root causes of the violence, underfunding programs that are more likely to improve the lives of our children, give them hope and tools to lead meaningful lives.

While our city population has plummeted, the amount we budget for police has climbed so that we now spend [\\$840 per resident more than 71 other major cities](#). In 2018, 83% of arrests were made for low level, non-violent crimes and disproportionately those arrested were people of color. At the very least, these arrests disrupt people's lives causing them to lose jobs, make it hard for them to find housing, lose wages during incarceration, and disrupt families. This is what over policing can do.

We should be investing in removing lead paint from housing as Professor Lawrence Brown suggests. I have seen grown patients who were lead poisoned as children. In addition to behavior problems that often result in falling into the over policed criminal justice system, the loss of potential income and quality of life due to loss in IQ from lead poisoning deprives all of us of the gifts of these Baltimoreans robbed of their potential.

Baltimore is second only to Detroit in numbers of [evicted households](#), disproportionately affecting people of color. Too many Baltimoreans are forced to pay more than the recommended 30% of income on housing, too often substandard and contaminated with lead paint, mold, infestations.

FY Mayor's proposed budget now calls for a \$25 million increase in funding for police.

Please let us heed Mayor Scott's words for a holistic approach to violence in our city. We have not reduced violent crime by devoting so much of city financial resources to policing as a solution. Remember the old saying that "to a hammer, everything looks like a nail." To most police, in too many situations, when they respond to a call, they see the person involved as a criminal especially if the person is black or brown.

Imagine diverting millions of dollars from policing into programs devoted to housing, education, recreation, and social services for our children traumatized by violence. Imagine reconfiguring 911 to identify situations where police are not appropriate and sending professionals other than police who can identify mental health problems and use skills of de-escalation and reconciliation.

Thank you considering re-defining how to protect Baltimoreans.

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