

May 27, 2021
Ethan Hasiuk
Baltimore, MD 21218



Testimony - FY2022 City Council Taxpayers' Night

Honorable members of the City Council,

My name is Ethan Hasiuk. I live in Charles Village in District 14, and I am here testifying on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ). JUFJ organizes more than 1,600 people in the city to support local social, racial, and economic justice issues.

Jewish tradition demands of us: "Choose life, so that you may live" (Deut 30:19). We are disappointed that the FY2022 Baltimore City Preliminary Budget continues a pattern of divesting and underinvesting from that which gives life to our communities, while increasing investments in policing and punishment that take life away.

As such, we are here to support the demands of our coalition partners in the Campaign for Justice, Safety, & Jobs, Baltimore Renters United, and Baltimore Fair Elections coalition:

1. A \$100 million cut from BPD's existing budget. The increases to police funding in this budget are unacceptable.
2. A \$30 million investment into a community wellness trust fund to be governed through a participatory budgeting process.
3. A \$70 million additional investment to support quality, affordable housing, high-quality public education, universal healthcare, jobs, a universal basic income, and community programs.
4. Removal of police entirely from responses to mental health distress, substance use, sex work, homelessness, and other quality of life issues. Baltimore must create an alternative to 911 that does not dispatch police but connects people in crisis with the mental health, housing, treatment, and harm reduction resources they need to live with dignity.
5. \$2.5 million to fund counsel for renters facing eviction.
6. \$2.5 million to fund the new Fair Elections program.

This proposed budget *increases* BPD funding and doesn't invest in new programs designed to keep people housed and increase the political power of individual Baltimoreans. A budget is a moral document. We respectfully urge you to invest in supporting Black, brown, and low-income communities, not in policing them. Thank you.