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To the Baltimore City Council:

A year after the murder of George Floyd, a national reckoning on policing and race in America, and Baltimore is moving in the WRONG direction. I am writing to demand the city council refuse to increase funding to BPD.

As it stands, the city budget calls for a \$27M increase in BPD's budget and a \$12M cut to our public schools. This is a travesty! I feel the City Council should defund BPD by \$100M and instead, invest in Black communities.

Six years after the murder of Freddie Gray & the Baltimore Uprising that followed, a DOJ investigation, years of consent decree implementation, 4 police commissioners, and over \$3 billion dollars spent, it is clear that BPD is beyond reform.

Poverty, poor education, lack of affordable housing, and health inequities drive crime and harm. Police do NOTHING to stop crime or deter it, and they take valuable resources away from proven harm-reduction strategies.

I would like to see 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.**

Further, I would like to see a \$30 million-dollar investment into a Community Wellness trust fund to be governed through a participatory budgeting process. Baltimoreans are more than capable of identifying what public safety look like, without increased police presence or surveillance tools. And we need the funding to do so.

In addition, I would like to see \$70 million dollars be allocated to support quality, affordable housing, high quality public education, universal healthcare, jobs, a universal basic income, and community programs.

We should work to remove police entirely from responses to mental health distress, substance use, sex work, homelessness, and other quality-of-life issues.

Finally, I would like to see 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.

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony.

Regards,
Sarah S.