

May 27, 2021

Dan Richman - Baltimore, MD 21224

FY2022 City Council Taxpayers' Night

Dear members of the City Council:

My name is Dan Richman, I live in the Patterson Park neighborhood in council district 1.

I am testifying in support of substantially decreasing funding for the police department and reallocating to increase funding for community-based safety and wellness programs, youth programs, affordable housing, and other helpful services. I'm sick of having so much of my tax dollars spent on the police and still needing workarounds for public safety because the police department is so destructive and ineffective for most of the problems we face.

For one example, I'm currently volunteering with other members of my neighborhood and district to implement public safety programs that avoid calling the police. This is because I don't want children or adults swept into the incarceration system, I want skillful and nonviolent ways of responding to behavioral or substance abuse issues, and I want problems solved by community members and I don't want the criminalization of poverty.

The city is working against us when it hardly funds the scale of community-based safety programs that we need, and it funds the police department that is worsening the problems we're trying to solve.

The specific amendments I request are:

- Cut \$100 million from the proposed BPD budget
- Reallocate \$30 million to a community wellness trust fund governed by community members
- Reallocate \$70 million for affordable housing, public education, universal healthcare, jobs and universal basic income programs, and other community programs
- Create an alternative to 911 that connects people in crisis with mental health, housing, treatment, and harm reduction resources and removes police entirely from responses to mental health distress, substance use, sex work, homelessness, and other quality of life issues
- Add \$2.5 million to fund renters' Right to Counsel when facing eviction
- Add \$2.5 million to fund the new Fair Elections program

Sincerely,

Dan Richman