

Dear City Council Members,

I am testifying as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore to ask that you divest \$100M from the over-half-billion-dollar Baltimore Police Department budget and encourage the Mayor to redirect those funds to transparent and accountable community-led solutions that address the root causes of crime. In addition, I ask that you advocate for the creation of a trust that communities can dictate where and how the money is reinvested.

I am a 15-year resident of Waverly and Baltimore, and a member of the Charles Village synagogue Hinenu. SURJ works in collaboration with the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs.

While I have personally been the victim of burglary and robbery — I still know that it is not the police that can keep us safe, and the portion of the budget locked up in BPD is in the way of what we need to keep us ALL safe.

Policing as we know it does not work. Putting more and more of our budget into policing hasn't made anyone any safer. You can't solve violence with more violence. Instead of giving additional funding for police to expand technology and personnel to over-police already over-policed communities, money should be invested in after-school programs, crisis centers that help those who need help, felony-diversion initiatives, youth centers and many more community-centered programs that will actually address public safety and developmental community concerns.

It is for these reasons that I ask you to divest \$100M from the Baltimore Police Department budget and redirect those funds to transparent and accountable community-led solutions that address the root causes of crime, including a trust that communities can dictate where and how the money is reinvested.

Additionally, as a member of SURJ Baltimore I stand in solidarity with Baltimore Safe Haven in their demands for financial support for LGBTQ folks experiencing homelessness, access to a building from the city, grant funds for trans-led orgs to provide direct services, and the creation of an LGBTQ office in city hall.

Finally, we believe that after over a million dollars spent, two mistrials, and two overturned guilty verdicts, that the relentless over-prosecution of Keith Davis Jr. has not made this city safer and only wasted precious resources that could be use saving the lives of many Baltimoreans, rather than ruining the life of one man and his family. We ask you do everything in your power to 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.

Thank you for your time.

Jonathan Rochkind
Waverly
SURJ Baltimore