

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Calling Hamilton To Action

From: Michael Kiriakou

Sent: Monday, June 15, 2020 3:49 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

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Dear Chair and Members of Emergency & Community Services Committee,

I am writing to you today to express my concern regarding the **Hamilton Police Services 2020 budget of \$172 million from the total \$924 million operational budget for the City of Hamilton**. This is roughly a 4% increase from the 2019 Police Services Budget. The Hamilton Police (on the City approved budget) will spend \$78,806 on ammunition, \$95,000 on surveillance and \$61,409 on tasers. Comparatively, only \$158 million will be spent on social services, including transit and healthy/safe communities.

Systemic racism in Canada is more prevalent than our Canadian MPs may be willing to admit. It takes on many forms such as but not limited to the availability of social resources, hiring practices, and of course racial profiling. The movement to defund police is rooted in the potential for a better system. A reallocation of funds to better serve Black, Indigenous, and people of colour in Hamilton. May we lead the way to a better community where all members are supported equitably.

I am asking that you, as council members, pledge to do the following:

1. To **never again** vote to increase the Hamilton Police Services budget
2. Ensure the Hamilton Police Services uphold their promise to “take action to eliminate racism” (Hamilton Chief of Police, Eric Girt, 2020). By proposing and implementing a Hamilton Police Service budget cut and to invest that cut into services which better serve our community (see 3.)
3. To prioritize the expansion of **community-led health and safety initiatives** over future financial investment into the Hamilton Police Services

In order to do this, I call on you and other elected officials to reduce funding in these ways:

- Withhold pensions and don't rehire cops involved in excessive force cases
- Require cops to be liable for misconduct settlements
- Reduce the size of the police force, stop sending armed/uniformed cops on mental health-related calls, or allow policing in schools

An increased police presence does not keep us safe, rather it directly threatens the lives of our most vulnerable communities (BIPOC, the LGBTQ2S+ community, unhoused people, street-based sex workers, people with disabilities, people experiencing poverty, etc). Instead of investing in the

police, our city must prioritize alternatives like education, increased mental health services, housing initiatives, income security, harm reduction services, accessible rehabilitation, mutual aid, social workers, conflict resolution services, transformative justice, and other vital community-based support systems. **These initiatives must support our most vulnerable communities and centre the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and people of colour in Hamilton.** We should look to and learn from organizations like [Black Lives Matter Toronto](#), [Black Legal Action Centre](#), [PASAN](#), [Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project](#), [Maggie's](#), [Showing Up for Racial Justice](#), and so many more.

Our city as a whole can lead the way in defining public safety through community not cops, where Black, Indigenous and people of colour are free from police oppression. I am asking you to create a better future for all residents by divesting from harmful policing and investing in life-affirming services.

Sincerely,

Michael