

**Pilon, Janet**

---

**Subject:** A letter from a McMaster alumnus

From: **Daniel Thompson-Blum**

Date: Thu., Jun. 11, 2020, 18:19

Subject: A letter from a McMaster alumnus

To: <[maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca](mailto:maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca)>, <[jason.farr@hamilton.ca](mailto:jason.farr@hamilton.ca)>, <[chad.collins@hamilton.ca](mailto:chad.collins@hamilton.ca)>, <[brad.clark@hamilton.ca](mailto:brad.clark@hamilton.ca)>, <[nrinder.nann@hamilton.ca](mailto:nrinder.nann@hamilton.ca)>, Merulla, Sam <[sam.merulla@hamilton.ca](mailto:sam.merulla@hamilton.ca)>, <[john-paul.danko@hamilton.ca](mailto:john-paul.danko@hamilton.ca)>, <[esther.pauls@hamilton.ca](mailto:esther.pauls@hamilton.ca)>, <[tom.jackson@hamilton.ca](mailto:tom.jackson@hamilton.ca)>, <[maria.pearson@hamilton.ca](mailto:maria.pearson@hamilton.ca)>, <[brenda.johnson@hamilton.ca](mailto:brenda.johnson@hamilton.ca)>, <[lloyd.ferguson@hamilton.ca](mailto:lloyd.ferguson@hamilton.ca)>, <[arlene.vanderbeek@hamilton.ca](mailto:arlene.vanderbeek@hamilton.ca)>, <[terry.whitehead@hamilton.ca](mailto:terry.whitehead@hamilton.ca)>, <[judi.partridge@hamilton.ca](mailto:judi.partridge@hamilton.ca)>, <[mayor@hamilton.ca](mailto:mayor@hamilton.ca)>

Mayor and councillors,

I am writing as a McMaster alumnus and ex-resident of Hamilton. Frankly, I find the response to the Black Lives Matter movement abhorrent. To call abolition “nonsensical” is to discredit decades of Black feminist thought. From their work, we know what a world without policing would look like and it is unacceptable that Councillor Collins refuse to “get into that debate”.

We are aware of the implications of defunding police. We are aware of the myriad benefits that await when the policing budget is reallocated to housing, social services, education, and health care. Put simply, when communities are supported, there is no *need* for a police presence. Councillor Jackson, I respectfully acknowledge the concerns of your ward’s residents, but investing in your community is the solution, not further policing and surveillance.

Mayor, I was particularly appalled by your belief that systemic racism can be addressed without defunding police services. Additionally, claiming you have a Black friend does not excuse your racism in the slightest.

The fact that Hamilton is not only refusing to consider defunding HPS but is actively allocating resources to them is unacceptable. The appointment of a “liason” is wholly inadequate and will not mend the rift between police and community members. This simply isn’t possible without defunding and disarming HPS. These actions spit in the face of the Black, Indigenous, racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ communities in Hamilton. As previously stated by Hamilton Queers Against Hate this “will not change the persistent negative experiences of Hamilton’s Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ communities have had when seeking assistance from Hamilton Police Service. These issues have existed over several decades and are still occurring.”

Another task force or report will not be enough to regain trust.

Again, the unmet demands are:

### **City Hall**

1. Defund the Hamilton police.
2. Invest tax dollars that would have gone to police towards initiatives fighting against food insecurity, racism and towards more affordable housing & other social services.
3. Ensure that HPS are not ticketing houseless people for existing in public.

### **HPS**

4. Release accounting data on taxes used to surveil and police Black, Indigenous and racialized communities.
5. Halt HPS purchases of weapons, high tech surveillance equipment and cease surveilling communities.
6. Cease ticketing and surveilling of houseless and disabled people.
7. Stop targeting activists and communities pushing back against white supremacists.

### **HWDSB**

8. Remove police SRO's from schools and fund public review of police violence that occurred in schools.
9. The school board *must* refrain from calling the police on children.
10. Collect and release data documenting disciplinary action against students by race and gender.
11. Implement a community run alternative to disciplinary action based on the principles of restorative justice.

Your inaction on the issues that matter to me is one of the reasons I left Hamilton and I expect I will not return. This is why your city has a difficult time retaining students after graduation.

Sincerely,

Daniel Thompson-Blum