

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Stevenson, Kirsten](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Ward 2 Resident  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 10, 2020 1:53:44 PM

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Kristen Stevenson and Members of the Hamilton Police Services Board,

My name is Jessica Elves and I live in Hamilton Ontario in Ward 2. I am writing in regards to my concern about the exorbitant budget of over \$170 million dollars that our city is pouring into a police force that is failing to serve our community. A police force that disproportionately targets racialized and queer communities within this city. A police force that for some insane reason has become the front line in dealing with people who suffer from mental illness, addiction, and homelessness.

My sister has Schizophrenia and a severe addiction to crystal meth. And when she is in a state of crisis and in need of help, my family and I have no other option than to call 911, who then send armed police officers to try (and largely fail) at de-escalating the situation. We send PEOPLE WITH GUNS. People in a uniform that for HUGE portions of our community fosters fear and untrustworthiness. **The mere presence of the police is an escalation of the situation in itself.** Why are we sending police to deal with people who DO NOT NEED POLICING? THESE PEOPLE NEED CARE. Why are there no services that we can turn to that can actually provide real care? Why do we continually spend money on perpetually arresting and locking people like my sister up in jail for months at a time as if that is going to remedy the situation?

We DO NOT want more money spent on failing review boards and advisory committees (IE: \$600 000 that was spent reviewing HPS conduct at 2019 Pride). We do not want even MORE money spent to equip police officers with body cams that have been shown to have no overall impact on police use of force.

**We DO NOT need an increase in police budgets and we DO NOT NEED or WANT more policing in our communities.** What we need is to DEFUND THE POLICE and spend that money on addressing the actual root cause of the majority of crime (social and income inequality) and creating REAL solutions. Such as affordable housing, food security, liveable wages, resources for people suffering from mental illness and addiction, community outreach programs.

**When you invest in communities crime goes down.** This is an IRREFUTABLE fact. It is a FACT that MORE POLICING DOES NOT EQUAL LESS CRIME. And for huge portions of our community more policing DOES NOT equal more safety either.

You cannot ignore the voices of the millions of marginalized and oppressed people across this country who are screaming out, and have been for decades, that the current system of policing is FAILING. Black People, Indigenous People, members of the 2SLGTBQIA+ community, Survivors of sexual violence and domestic violence, members of the disabled community, people who struggle with mental illness, people who suffer with addiction. We will not let their voices go unheard and we will not accept your bullshit platitudes. **We will continue to demand better.**

Jessica Elves