

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Policing and Systemic Racism in HamiltonFrom: **Janna Watkins**

Date: Thu, Jun 11, 2020 at 10:50 AM

Subject: Policing and Systemic Racism in Hamilton

To: <mayor@hamilton.ca>, <maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca>, <jason.farr@hamilton.ca>, <nrinder.nann@hamilton.ca>, <sam.merulla@hamilton.ca>, <chad.collins@hamilton.ca>, <tom.jackson@hamilton.ca>, <esther.pauls@hamilton.ca>, <john-paul.danko@hamilton.ca>, <ward8@hamilton.ca>, <brad.clark@hamilton.ca>, <maria.pearson@hamilton.ca>, <brenda.johnson@hamilton.ca>, <lloyd.ferguson@hamilton.ca>, <arlene.vanderbeek@hamilton.ca>, <terry.whitehead@hamilton.ca>, <judi.partridge@hamilton.ca>, <smehdi2796@hwdsb.on.ca>, <cprosic8502@hwdsb.on.ca>, <director@hwdsb.on.ca>, <gmacdona@hwdsb.on.ca>, <lsheppar@hwdsb.on.ca>, <jcravero@hwdsb.on.ca>, <mbaines@hwdsb.on.ca>, <ajjohnst@hwdsb.on.ca>, <cbingham@hwdsb.on.ca>, <mfmiller@hwdsb.on.ca>, <remulhol@hwdsb.on.ca>, <cpamill@hwdsb.on.ca>, <kaarcher@hwdsb.on.ca>, <ddanko@hwdsb.on.ca>, <bbuck@hwdsb.on.ca>, <cgalind@hwdsb.on.ca>, <ptut@hwdsb.on.ca>, <pdeathe@hwdsb.on.ca>, <Matthew.Green@parl.gc.ca>, <ahorwath-qp@ndp.on.ca>, <ahorwath-co@ndp.on.ca>, <FILOMENA.TASSI@parl.gc.ca>, <SShaw-QP@ndp.on.ca>, <donna.skelly@pc.ola.org>, <Bob.Bratina@parl.gc.ca>, <chiefadmins@hamiltonpolice.ca>, <info@hamiltonpolice.on.ca>, <icom@cogeco.ca>, <fbennink@zipsigns.com>, <rgelms@mac.com>, <doug.downey@pc.ola.org>

Hello My name is Janna Watkins

I am an independent Hairstylist, Yoga Teacher and former small business owner in Hamilton.

I am sending this letter to show my support for and endorsement of the demands made last week by black and racialized activists regarding the policing of black and racialized communities in Hamilton. I've attached a document outlining their demands and some links to articles and studies supporting why you should seriously consider doing your part to have them met.

It is important to listen to the voices and experiences of those you claim to serve. This can be a big step for that and can be an opportunity for Hamilton to set a positive example in this time of a global pandemic, and growing inquiries and understanding of Canada's racist roots.

Thank you for your time, your labour and consideration

Janna Watkins

To those invested in taking tangible action to eliminate white supremacy in the institutions they work in and benefit from,

Earlier this month, black and racialized organizers across the city made a list of specific demands addressing local institutions in the municipality of Hamilton, Ontario, the colonially occupied lands of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Mississaugas, Haudensaunee and Anishnaabeg. Here are those demands:

City Hall:

1. We call on the City of Hamilton to defund Hamilton Police Services (HPS) (1-3, 11, 12).
2. We call on the City of Hamilton to invest the tax dollars that would have otherwise gone to the policing sector to be delegated towards initiatives fighting food insecurity, racism and affordable housing & social services (4, 9-10, 15, 19, 36, 43, 44).
3. We call on the City of Hamilton to ensure that HPS are not ticketing homeless people for existing in public (5-6, 48).

Hamilton Police Services (HPS):

1. Release accounting on taxes used to surveil & police Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities (7-8, 45).
2. Halt purchases of weapons and high tech surveillance equipment, and cease surveillance (46-47).
3. Cease ticketing homeless and disabled people and forgive current charges (5-6, 48).
4. Stop targeting activists & communities building community responses to active white supremacist groups (6, 26-27).

Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB):

1. We demand that the HWDSB remove police SRO's from schools & fund public review of police violence that occurred in Schools.
2. We demand that the school board refrain from calling ops on kids (28)
3. We demand that the HWDSB collect & release data on documents the disciplinary action against students by race and gender. (64)
4. We demand that HWDSB implement a community run alternative to disciplinary action based on principles of restorative justice (37-39).

McMaster University

1. We call on McMaster University (President & Board of Hiring) to immediately terminate Glenn DeCaire's contract (13-14, 16).
2. We demand that DeCaire, alongside special constables on campus cease policing students. Black students across Ontario have experienced violence at the hands of campus police. (20, 23).
3. Join with other Universities (such as University of Minnesota) in cutting ties with police

departments (18, 24-25).

Ontario:

1. We demand that the Police Services Act (Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, 2019, S.O. 2019, c. 1 - Bill 68) be rewritten to give municipalities full control over police boards
2. We demand that the province of Ontario work with grassroots groups to divest from policing & invest in community initiatives with the goal of moving completely toward transformative justice (61).
3. The SIU needs to be composed completely of Black, Racialized and Indigenous Peoples with no current or former ties to the policing sector (29-35, 40-42).
4. SIU must begin collecting and publicly releasing race-based statistics on all fatalistic encounters between police and civilians. No more inquiries – direct action needs to be taken.
5. In light of COVID-19, we demand that all prisoners being held & awaiting trial at the Barton Jail Facility be released immediately, and that outrageous costs of ankle monitors & other means of surveilling those who are released be waived (21-22).

The City of Hamilton (49), Hamilton Police Services (51), the HWDSB (50), McMaster University (54), and the Province of Ontario (53) have all made statements regarding their stance on racism. Unfortunately their statements are based on a definition of racism as "bigotry and slander". This definition is limited in that it does not address the structural violence experienced by racialized people. Instead, we ask that these institutions adopt a definition of racism that incorporates an understanding that power is the primary feature of racism (63). In simple terms, Racism = Racial Prejudice + Power (where power is defined as, "authority granted through social structures and conventions—possibly supported by force or the threat of force—and access to means of communications and resources, to reinforce racial prejudice, regardless of the falsity of the underlying prejudiced assumption"; 63).

We petition these institutions (The City of Hamilton, Hamilton Police Services, the HWDSB, McMaster University, and the Province of Ontario) to seriously consider their deep racist roots, and begin to phase out their illegitimate access to power inherited from Canada's history of Slavery (58-59), Indigenous Genocide (55-57), and its contribution to Apartheid Models (60) implemented by other Colonial States and Institutions. The institutions named above can set an example for the world by implementing these specific and practical demands.

We ask that as you prepare to meet these demands you educate yourselves on the importance of the actions being demanded of you. Meeting these demands is a necessary step in being accountable to your commitment to anti-racism and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (52). Though educating ourselves in the matters of anti-racism, systemic racism, and structural violence is a lifelong process, we have kindly gathered resources which support these organizers demands.

References

1. Vitale, A. S. (2020, May 31). *The only solution is to defund the police*. The Nation. <https://www.thenation.com/article/activism/defund-police-protest/>
2. CBC News. (2020). City councillor joins growing call to defund police. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-defund-police-conversation-1.5600123>
3. Hudson, S. (2020). *Defunding the police will save Black and Indigenous lives In Canada*. Huffington Post. https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/defund-police-canada-black-indigenous-lives_ca_5ed65eb2c5b6ccd7c56bdf7d
4. General Issues Committee. (2019, November 29). *2020 tax supported capital budget* [PDF file]. City of Hamilton. <https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/media/browser/2019-12-06/2020-gic-tax-capital-budget-presentation-fcs19091-nov-29-2019.pdf>
5. Bennett, K. (2016). *ACTION cops police the 'same 25 people, day in, day out,' sergeant testifies*. CBC News Hamilton. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/action-cops-police-the-same-25-people-day-in-day-out-sergeant-testifies-1.3851779>
6. Bennett, K. (2016, February 28). *What is the future of Hamilton Police's ACTION team?* CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/headlines/what-is-the-future-of-hamilton-police-s-action-team-1.3468284>
7. *2019 approved operating & capital budgets* [PDF file]. (n.d.). City of Hamilton. <https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/media/browser/2019-07-24/2019-approved-budget-book.pdf>
8. *2018 approved operating & capital budgets* [PDF File]. City of Hamilton. <https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/media/browser/2018-06-29/2018-approved-budget-book-october-2018.pdf>
9. *Hamilton hospitals funding cuts will climb to \$255M by 2023 under Ford Conservatives*. (2019, September 19). Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). <https://cupe.ca/hamilton-hospitals-funding-cuts-will-climb-255m-2023-under-ford-conservatives>
10. Jones, A. (2020, January 23). *Ontario hospitals ask Ford government for nearly \$1B funding increase*. Global News. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6452164/ontario-hospitals-funding-overcrowding/>
Ontario hospitals requested an increase of 1 billion because of lack of equipment and overcrowding shortly before Covid-19 quarantine
11. Hamblin, J. (Staff writer), Wells, K. (Executive producer), & Vitale, A. (Guest). (2020, June 6) *Listen: would defunding the police make us safer?* [Audio podcast episode transcription]. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/06/would-defunding-police-make-us-safer/612766/>
12. *Hamilton crime trends during COVID-19*. (2020, May 1). Hamilton Police Service. <https://hamiltonpolice.on.ca/news/hamilton-crime-trends-during-covid-19/>
The stats on the Hamilton Police Service board show that crime has drastically decreased since Covid-Quarantine measures have been in place
13. Bennett, K. (2015, October 19). *'Unjustifiable': Human rights Commission slams Hamilton police on carding*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/headlines/unjustifiable-human-rights-commission-slams-hamilton-police-on-carding-1.3294576>
“‘Hamilton police chief Glenn De Caire's position on carding and street checks contains a fundamental and significant error,’ writes Ruth Goba, interim chief commissioner at the Ontario Human Rights Commission. ... ‘This is a textbook description of racial profiling,’”

14. Craggs, S. (2015, September 10). *Police board chair defends chief over forwarding racially charged email*. CBC News Hamilton. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/police-board-chair-defends-chief-over-forwarding-racially-charged-email-1.3221924>
15. *Vital signs 2015*. (n.d.). Hamilton Community Foundation. <https://www.hamiltoncommunityfoundation.ca/vital-signs-2015/gap-rich-poor-2015/>
16. Bennett, K. (2015, November 17). *6 years with Chief Glenn De Caire: Highlights and controversies*. CBC News Hamilton. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/headlines/6-years-with-chief-glenn-de-caire-highlights-and-controversies-1.3323174>
17. Metz, N., & Burdina M. (2018). Neighbourhood income equality and property crime. *Urban Studies*, 55(1), 133–150. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098016643914>
18. Dicker, R. (2020, May 28). *University Of Minnesota cuts ties with Minneapolis Police after George Floyd death*. Huffington Post. https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/university-of-minnesota-minneapolis-police-george-floyd_n_5ecf91e3c5b6ce8f6b7c0c58?ri18n
19. Szalavits, M. (2017, December 8). *The surprising factors driving murder rates: Income inequality and respect*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/dec/08/income-inequality-murder-homicide-rates>
20. *National petition to schools, colleges, and universities for the immediate divestment from police*. (n.d.). Scholars for Black Lives. <https://www.scholars4blacklives.org/divestment-petition>
- “In nearly half of the nation’s largest school districts, police and security officers are hired more often than counselors and health professionals. On college and university campuses, research shows us that Black students are routinely profiled, assumed to not belong, and forced to authenticate their identities at the risk of arrest or harm. ... As ongoing furloughs and layoffs continue impacting educators and students, millions of dollars are reportedly being diverted from students to employ police as school resource officers. Furthermore, through the Department of Defense’s 1033 Program, public funds have continuously been used to indirectly subsidize the further militarization of police, not to protect and serve people, but the property interests of racial capitalism.”
21. Correctional Services Division, MCSCS. (2012/13). *Program effectiveness, statistics and applied research*. Ministry of the Solicitor General. <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/885381/hamilton-wentworth-detention-centre-demographics.pdf>

Black and Indigenous Hamiltonians are a small percentage of the population yet make up the largest populations of prisons

22. *Census 2016: Population demographics*. City of Hamilton. <https://spatialolutions.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=4927e9d0848b42eab65b8e92848a038c>
23. Watkins, A. (2016, March 24). *The hiring and requested firing of Glenn de Caire*. The Silhouette. <https://www.thesil.ca/the-hiring-and-firing-of-glenn-de-caire>
24. Hannem, S., & Schneider C. (2020, June 1). *Canadian universities should divest from policing interests*. Canadian Dimension. <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/canadian-universities-should-divest-from-policing-interests>
- "To continue to partner with police, to employ police as instructors, and to profit from the broken and dysfunctional policing system is to be complicit in every police killing of a racialized person, every police abuse of an Indigenous woman, every stop and frisk, and every blind eye turned to racialized

hate and harm.”

25. Whitford, E., & Burke L. (2020, June 5). *Students demand campuses cut ties with police*, Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/06/05/students-demand-universities-break-ties-local-police-few-have>

26. Goba, R. (2015, October 22). *Re: Carding is basic investigative work, Hamilton officers say*. Ontario Human Rights Commission. <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/2491044/ohrc-response-to-glenn-de-caire-approach.pdf>

27. Bennett, K. (2015, November 18). *Hamilton Police carded the same aboriginal man 14 times in 1 year*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/headlines/aboriginal-carded-14-times-1.3324958>

28. Eckholm, E.(2014, Sept 22) *With Police in Schools, More Children in Court* http://lwvcharleston.org/files/nyt_with_police_in_schools_more_children_in_court.pdf
“There is no evidence that placing officers in the schools improves safety,”

29. Carter, A. (2016, December 12). *Brantford cop said he 'murdered' 2 people, cleared by SIU*. CBC News Hamilton. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/brantford-siu-1.3893250>

30. Fragomeni, C. (2019, November 14). *Inquest jury rules Anthony Divers death a homicide*. The Hamilton Spectator. <https://www.thespec.com/news/hamilton-region/2019/11/14/inquest-jury-rules-anthony-divers-death-a-homicide.html>

31. Green, J. (2015, July 17). *Steve Mesic's widow sues Hamilton Police over fatal shooting*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/headlines/steve-mesic-s-widow-sues-hamilton-police-over-fatal-shooting-1.3151827>

32. Jung, C. (2018, January 12). *'No criminal offence': OPP officer faces no charges after fatal Nipigon, Ont. shooting*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/opp-nipigon-siu-report-fatal-shooting-1.4482787>

33. *SIU says Hamilton police were justified in fatal shooting of Quinn MacDougall*. (2019, April 11). The Hamilton Spectator. <https://www.thespec.com/news/hamilton-region/2019/04/11/siu-says-hamilton-police-were-justified-in-fatal-shooting-of-quinn-macdougall.html>

34. CBC News. (2017, October 17). *SIU clears OPP in fatal 2016 crash*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/jasper-fatal-crash-opp-siu-1.4358307>

35. Special Investigations Unit. (2017, August 17). *SIU director's report - Case # 16-PVD-126* Government of Ontario. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/siu-directors-report-case-16-pvd-126>

36. Galabuzi, G.-E. (2006). *Canada's economic apartheid: The social exclusion of racialized groups in the new century*. Canadian Scholars' Press.

“There is mounting evidence that the bouts of economic restructuring Canada has endured in the last two decades have intensified processes of racialization and feminization in the labour markets, leading to increased economic, social, political inequality and immiseration of vulnerable populations of women, men and children. The patterns of intensified inequality suggest that racialized groups, immigrants, refugees, and women have borne the brunt of economic restructuring and austerity.” (p. 10)

37. *Lesson 1: What is restorative justice?* (n.d.). Centre for Justice & Reconciliation. <http://restorativejustice.org/restorative-justice/about-restorative-justice/tutorial-intro-to-restorative-justice/lesson-1-what-is-restorative-justice/#sthash.BmBNrPEV.dpbs>

38. Keller, B. (2017, February 16). *Is prison the answer to violence?* The Marshall Project. <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2017/02/16/is-prison-the-answer-to-violence>

"What's striking about that is that 90 percent of the victims who have had the choice between seeing the person who hurt them in Common Justice and seeing them in prison have chosen Common Justice."

39. Neustaeter, B. (2019, November 1). 'I do forgive him as a human': Rape victim confronts her attacker in restorative justice process. CTV News. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/i-do-forgive-him-as-a-human-rape-victim-confronts-her-attacker-in-restorative-justice-process-1.4665519>

40. Joseph, A. J. (2019, April 12). *Police board ignores city's promises of inclusion and diversity with latest appointment.* The Hamilton Spectator. <https://www.thespec.com/opinion/contributors/2019/04/12/police-board-ignores-city-s-promises-of-inclusion-and-diversity-with-latest-appointment.html>

41. *Ottawa man dies after 2-car collision in Vanier.* (2016, April 13). CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/alex-cross-dies-after-vanier-crash-1.3533979>

42. McIntosh, E. & Wheeler S. (2017, July 12). *Who was the nameless man fatally shot by Toronto police?* The Toronto Star. <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/07/12/siu-wont-charge-officer-who-fatally-shot-man-on-toronto-rail-corridor.html>

43. *We need your help: Personal protective equipment (PPE) donations.* (2020). City of Hamilton. <https://www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-donations>

44. *Hamilton hunger report 2019.* (2019). Hamilton Food Share. <https://www.hamiltonfoodshare.org/wp-content/uploads/Hamilton-Food-Share-Hunger-Report-2019.pdf>

45. Boisvert, N. (2018, December 10). *Black people 'grossly over represented' in violent police interactions, Ontario human rights report says.* CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ohrc-interim-profiling-report-1.4939242>

46. Carter, A. (2013, June 5). *Group protests Enbridge donations to Hamilton police.* CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/group-protests-enbridge-donations-to-hamilton-police-1.1308945>

47. Taekema, D. (2018, June 21). *Hamilton police board approves purchase of more military-style assault rifles.* CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/c8-rifle-hamilton-police-1.4716802>

"It will cost an estimated \$95,562.23 add the "accurate, rugged and reliable" rifles to the service's arsenal."

48. *Evicting the homeless.* (2019, January 18). Hamilton Tenants Solidarity Network <https://www.hamiltontenantssolidarity.ca/post/evicting-the-homeless>

49. Nagy, D. (2020, June 7). *Hamilton's Mayor talks anti-racism protests and calls to defund the police.* CHCH News. <https://www.chch.com/hamiltons-mayor-talks-anti-racism-protests-and-calls-to-defund-the-police/>

"We need to do, collectively, everything we can to stamp (racism) out" Mayor Fred Eisenberger

50. Johnstone, A., & Figueiredo, M. (2020, June 1). *An open letter from HWDSB chair Alex Johnstone and director Manny Figueiredo.* Hamilton Wentworth District School Board. <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/blog/an-open-letter-from-hwdsb-chair-alex-johnstone-and-director-manny-figueiredo/>

51. *Human rights in policing in Hamilton*. (2017, May 5). Hamilton Police Service. <https://hamiltonpolice.on.ca/about/human-rights-policing-hamilton>
52. Draft Committee. (1948. December 10). *The universal declaration of human rights*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
53. *Anti-racism directorate*. (2020, June 5). Government of Ontario. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/anti-racism-directorate>
54. O'Byrne, P. M. (2020, June 3). *Dean & VP [Michael G DeGroote School of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences McMaster University] message regarding racism*. McMaster University Faculty of Health Sciences. <https://healthsci.mcmaster.ca/home/2020/06/03/dean-vp-message-regarding-racism>
55. United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. (n.d.). *Genocide*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>
56. *Colonialism and its impacts*. (2016). The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. http://fnn.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/LWM3_ColonialismImpacts.pdf
57. Dhillon, J. (2019, December 20). *Exclusive: Canada police prepared to shoot Indigenous activists, documents show*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/20/canada-indigenous-land-defenders-police-documents>
58. McRae, M. (n.d.). *The story of slavery in Canadian history*. Canadian Museum of Human Rights. <https://humanrights.ca/story/the-story-of-slavery-in-canadian-history>
59. Brown, K. G. (2019, February 18). *Canada's slavery secret: The whitewashing of 200 years of enslavement*. CBC Radio. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/canada-s-slavery-secret-the-whitewashing-of-200-years-of-enslavement-1.4726313>
60. Bélanger, P. & Yoon K. (2018, November 17). *Canada's apartheid*. Lapsus Lima. <http://www.lapsuslima.com/canadas-apartheid/>
61. Mingus, M. (n.d.). *Transformative justice: A brief description*. Transform Harm. <https://transformharm.org/transformative-justice-a-brief-description/>
62. Law Commission of Canada. From restorative justice to transformative justice: Discussion paper. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/10289/Participatory%20Justice%20Discussion%20Paper%20EN.pdf?sequence=1>
- "The Law Commission of Canada believes that restorative justice and transformative justice present new possibilities for responding to conflict in a positive and constructive manner by using conflict to encourage the development of strong and respectful relationships." pg42
63. Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre. What is Racism? (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.aclrc.com/racism-and-power>
64. Wallace, J & Goodkind, S & Wallace, C & Bachman, J *Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Differences in School Discipline among U.S. High School Students: 1991-2005* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2678799/>
- "We found that Black, Hispanic, and American Indian youth are slightly more likely than White and Asian American youth to be sent to the office and substantially (two to five times) more likely to be suspended or expelled."