

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Call for the Defunding of Hamilton Police Services

From: Julia Forrester

Sent: Friday, June 12, 2020 2:00 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Call for the Defunding of Hamilton Police Services

Dear Chair and Members of the General Issues Committee,

I am writing to you today, at the recommendation of the Office of the Mayor, in regard to the systemic racism and discrimination faced by marginalized and BIPOC folks in Hamilton.

While proposed initiatives such as having Hamilton police officers wearing body cameras while on-duty are important steps towards increasing transparency and accountability between the police and our community, body cameras have not been conclusively proven to result in a reduction of force used by officers. As such, further measures are required to ensure the safety of all Hamiltonians in our city.

That is why I am calling on you, as Chair and Members of the General Issues Committee, to take action to defund the Hamilton Police Service. By divesting funds from the Hamilton Police Services, the city could reallocate funds and other resources towards education and social services - particularly those related to mental health, domestic violence, and homelessness. This reallocation would not only shift responsibility for these issues away from police and towards those more qualified to handle them, but also consequently ensure Hamiltonians, especially marginalized ones who are often disproportionately affected by these issues, feel the safety, support, and respect they deserve. Doing so would be a crucial step towards addressing the systemic racism faced by BIPOC folks in Hamilton and preventing future injustices against them and other marginalized Hamiltonians, such as our LGBTQIA+ community members. Further, it has been found that increasing the social infrastructure of communities results in them being more resilient, which, if the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, is vital to all of our survival and prosperity.

Addressing the systemic challenges faced by our fellow Hamiltonians cannot wait any longer. I urge you to take immediate action to do so, starting with voting to decrease the annual operating budget of the Hamilton Police Services. We will all be better off for it.

Sincerely,

Julia Forrester