

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Please support defunding the police

From: Rochelle Martin

Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 9:45 AM

To: Farr, Jason

Cc: hwdsbkidsneedhelp@gmail.com; Office of the Mayor; Wilson, Maureen; Nann, Nrinder; clerk@hamilton.ca;

Matthew.Green@parl.gc.ca; ahorwath-q@ndp.on.ca

Subject: Please support defunding the police

Hi Jason,

As you know, I've been an active resident of the Central Neighborhood/Ward 2 for many years. I'm writing today to ask you to support a serious and significant defunding and reimagining of the Hamilton Police Service. I'm embarrassed to admit that prior to the most recent instances of police killings and brutality in the US and Canada and the GTA, and the Black Lives Matter movement's response to this, I had never really considered the possibility that we could be free of the the police officers that have harassed *even me* (a female, professional, white) throughout my life! Until recently, I hadn't imagined that we could do things differently, but now I'd like to suggest that we must.

One of the reasons police claim they need weapons and big pay/budgets is the danger they face in their work. As a Registered Nurse who's worked in acute psychiatry, ER crisis care, and now the corrections system, I am acutely aware that my job is dangerous. However, did you know that health care workers are the highest risk group for occupational violence in the entire workforce? Our jobs are much more dangerous than law enforcement* (quite apart from the risk of contracting the Corona virus during this pandemic). (*For example, see Clancy, 2015: WorkSafe BC show 3722 health-care workers were injured by violence at work between 2005 and 2012. By comparison, the law enforcement sector saw only 241 workers injured over the same time period. The most violent assaults of health-care workers happen in emergency rooms and psychiatric wards.)

Like police, as an RN, I've dealt with plenty of violent, dangerous, suicidal, and terrifyingly mentally ill people, some with weapons.

With colleagues, I've managed to diffuse, calm, negotiate, redirect, and if necessary, safely and compassionately restrain these individuals (physically, or with medications), all without a gun.

I've never injured a client, and have certainly never harassed or beaten or killed any. Yet with 23 yrs. of RN experience, specialty certification, and a Masters degree, I make \$30,000 less than the average police constable.

We *can* defund the police - reduce salaries (especially of the 79% on the Sunshine List), reduce spending on weapons and armored vehicles, and hire social workers, peer advocates, addictions counselors, mental health RNs, and community organizers to replace these largely ineffectual *and dangerous* police officers. We can have a small, elite SWAT-type police team for those rare times when weapons are required, and we can have investigators - without guns, most of the time - to solve crimes. But the majority of what is currently on-the-street "police work" can be done more safely, more compassionately, more effectively, and at less cost, by community workers and social/health service professionals, I believe.

Thank you for considering all this, Jason. I'll close with a few stats regarding our HPS:

* We spend \$171 million on policing but only \$158 million on social services here in Hamilton.

* There are 675 police officers on the sunshine list. That equates to 36.51% of city employees on the sunshine list employed by the police.

* The percentage of all Hamilton Police on the sunshine list is 61%.

- * The percentage of sworn officers on the sunshine list is 79%.
- * Average salary of a Constable \$116,527
- * Average salary of a Detective Constable is \$123,073
- * Average salary of a Sergeant 1st Class is \$135,110
- * Average salary of a Sergeant 2nd class is \$122,979
- * Policing costs are the highest cost to Hamilton's taxpayers.

Warmly,

Rochelle Martin, BScN, RN, MDiv, CPMHN