

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** In Support of Defund HPS

**From:** Danielle Hitchcock-Welsh

**Sent:** December 3, 2020 12:24 PM

**To:** Whitehead, Terry <[Terry.Whitehead@hamilton.ca](mailto:Terry.Whitehead@hamilton.ca)>; [SShaw-CO@ndp.on.ca](mailto:Sshaw-CO@ndp.on.ca); Office of the Mayor <[mayor@hamilton.ca](mailto:mayor@hamilton.ca)>; [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)

**Subject:** In Support of Defund HPS

To my elected officials:

I've written Mr. Eisenberger and Mr. Whitehead several times but have decided to include Ms. Shaw on this communication as well.

The way we are treating the youth of our city who are rightfully asking us to tackle houselessness in this city by moving around the excessively high police budget is disgraceful.

They are peaceful protestors who are genuinely looking out for the most vulnerable in our society and our mayor is going on record that "the books should be thrown at them"? Ridiculous! And irresponsible!

Each person being arrested and removed from City Hall (public property) had 6+ police officers with them. Isn't that in and of itself showcasing the need for divesting funds from the police? Surely our tax dollars don't need 6 officers to 1 peaceful protestor.

Personally, I don't yet believe in abolishing the police entirely. But surely we can get to a place where the police isn't the only service to call. They shouldn't be going on mental health calls, dealing with houselessness people, etc. etc. etc. I have done the research (and continue to do the anti-racism work) to realize that we spend far too much on police in society in general. If we reallocate funds to housing, child welfare, social services, mental health services, etc. then the crime rate will decrease. People are driven to crime when they are in dire need. If we fix those issues, we can get closer to a better society.

Instead of outright exclaiming "their demands are ridiculous" or "that's not how it works" or "we are never going to defund the police", why not actually meet with them publicly and LISTEN. Isn't that what your constituents are paying you to do? To listen to their thoughts and input?

These youth leaders are the future. There will be a time when we invest more in people and less in police, why not start the conversation?

And please, if you haven't, start doing the anti-racism work. You'll realize quickly how many of Hamilton's policies are in actuality racist policies. We need to have the courage to look at ourselves and realize our complicity and we must change. **Ibram X Kendi's How to be An Anti-racist** and **Desmond Cole's The Skin We're In** are great places to start. Desmond Cole, who was arrested by Hamilton police yesterday... because he was supporting Freedom Camp.

Thanks for your time,  
Danielle