

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Defund the police/homeless action

From: Darren Green

Sent: Thursday, December 3, 2020 9:19 AM

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Dear Mayor and Council,

In Hamilton there are over 6,000 people on a waiting list for social housing. Over 350 are identified as homeless, though this number is probably higher. There are at least 28 encampments throughout the city. The lost jobs to the pandemic is leading to evictions, renoventions are increasing. Gentrification has removed people from their homes. The pending lockdown will put even more out of work and facing the choice of paying rent or feeding their kids.

We have a group of young people calling on our city to Defund the Hamilton Police Service and use that money towards social housing. They are calling for the surplus of over \$500,000.00 from last year's police budget be used for the same. This group of young people are being vilified and ignored by our city's leadership. They have been issued tickets, arrested for taking a stand, for protesting using their constitutional rights as guaranteed under the Charter. Homeless people among them had their belongings destroyed by City By-Law Officers.

Let's be clear, no one wants to get rid of the police (well some do). Yet they need to do better. This year they have asked for an increase of four million dollars. Why? If they had a surplus of five hundred thousand last year why do they need an increase this year? The police budget is not shown to the public; we have no way of seeing how that money is spent. So when they call for defunding, they are absolutely right. Convince us that they need that money; show us the line by line budget.

Until then there will be calls from our young and engaged citizens who have every right to ask questions and call for accountability. They are also right in calling for action on our homeless population, Hamilton ACORN has done a great job of showing how low income, defenseless renters are being treated. Councilors, your next challenger in the upcoming election will be one of these young people and they are going to make you look out of touch in any debate you have with them on this subject.

All they are saying is DO SOMETHING!

Darren Green